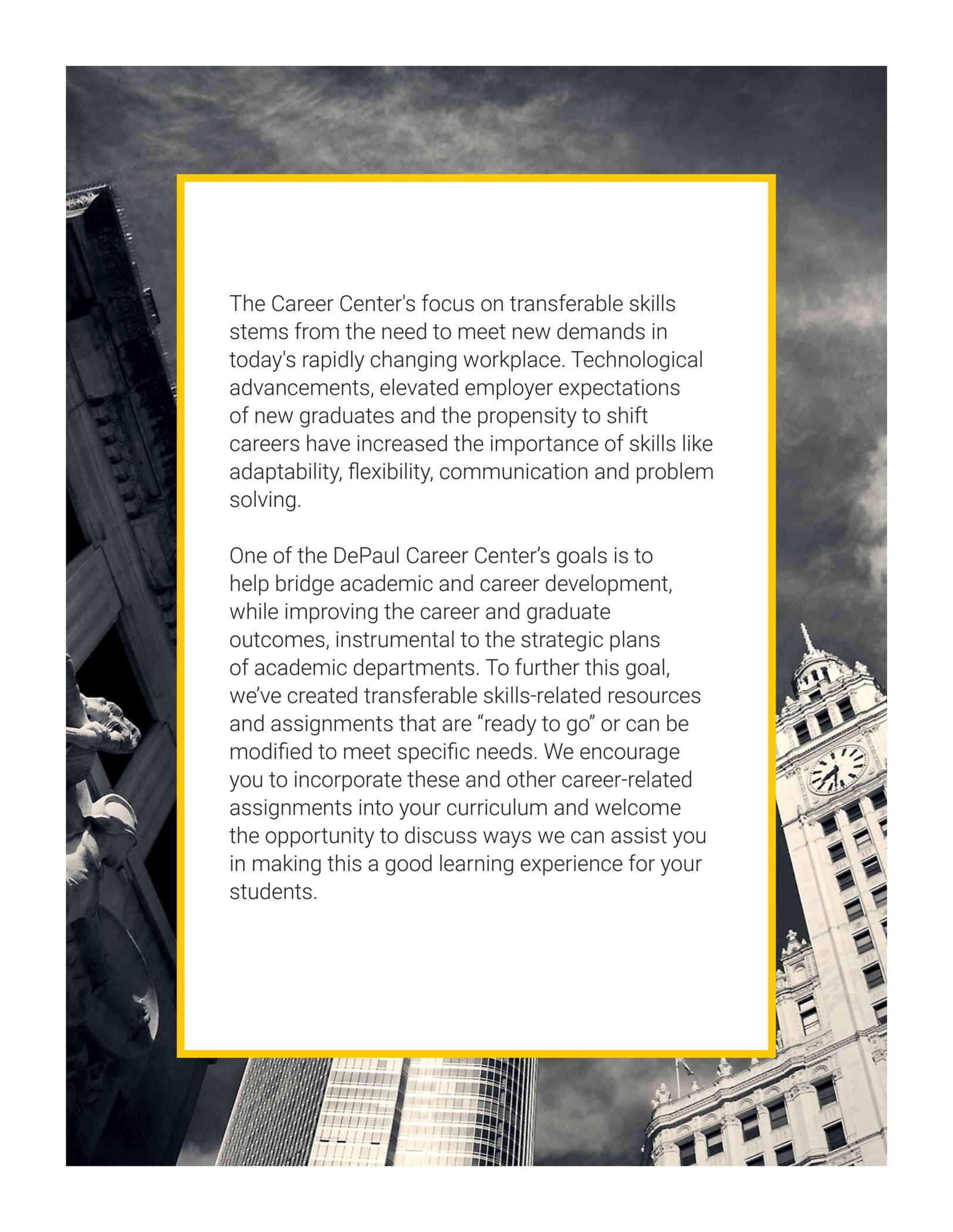


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# Bridging an Awareness Gap: Integrating Transferable Skills in Your Classroom

Resources and Exercises That Explore  
Transferable Skills



The background of the page is a collage of city buildings and a cloudy sky. On the left, there are dark, modern skyscrapers. On the right, there is a tall, light-colored building with a clock tower and a dome. The sky is filled with dark, dramatic clouds. In the center, there is a white rectangular box with a yellow border containing two paragraphs of text.

The Career Center's focus on transferable skills stems from the need to meet new demands in today's rapidly changing workplace. Technological advancements, elevated employer expectations of new graduates and the propensity to shift careers have increased the importance of skills like adaptability, flexibility, communication and problem solving.

One of the DePaul Career Center's goals is to help bridge academic and career development, while improving the career and graduate outcomes, instrumental to the strategic plans of academic departments. To further this goal, we've created transferable skills-related resources and assignments that are "ready to go" or can be modified to meet specific needs. We encourage you to incorporate these and other career-related assignments into your curriculum and welcome the opportunity to discuss ways we can assist you in making this a good learning experience for your students.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

This document features content adapted from a wide variety of sources, ranging from career-focused blogs to university career center resources. In the Table of Contents below, we have indicated the original source material for each section of this text.

● <b>Skills and the Future of Work</b>	4
● <b>Transferable Skills Syllabus Statement</b>	5
● <b>Transferable Skills Matrix</b>	6
● <b>Transferable Skills Worksheet</b>	7
● <b>Transferable Skills on the Resume</b>	8
● <b>Transferable Skills and Accomplishment Statements</b> Career Center - San Jose University ( <a href="http://www.sjsu.edu/careercenter/students/find-a-job-internship/resumes-cover-letters/accomplishment-statements/index.html">http://www.sjsu.edu/careercenter/students/find-a-job-internship/resumes-cover-letters/accomplishment-statements/index.html</a> )	10
● <b>CASE STUDY: Integrating Transferable Skills in Learning Outcomes</b> University of Waterloo - Center for Teaching Excellence ( <a href="https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/support/integrative-learning/watcv/watcv-course-integration-instructors">https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/support/integrative-learning/watcv/watcv-course-integration-instructors</a> )	12
● <b>Skills Hero: The Story of Your Skills</b> Chris Czarnik Career Search Expert and Speaker-Creator of The Human Search Engine® Process for Job Search	16
● <b>Visualizing Skills: Mapping and Planning Your Skills Future</b> Cindy Potvin "Taking control of your learning by mapping out your skills" ( <a href="https://blog.cindypotvin.com/taking-control-learning-by-mapping-out-your-skills/">https://blog.cindypotvin.com/taking-control-learning-by-mapping-out-your-skills/</a> )	18
● <b>About Me: Your Skills and Your Digital Brand</b> Nicole Fenton, coauthor of <i>Nicely Said: Writing for the Web with Style and Purpose</i> ( <a href="https://99u.adobe.com/articles/51669/how-to-write-about-me-section">https://99u.adobe.com/articles/51669/how-to-write-about-me-section</a> )	20
● <b>I Did What? Cataloging Skills from Your Everyday</b> Careercruising.com ( <a href="https://www.careercruising.com/newmedia/docs/American/Activities/Activity10.pdf">https://www.careercruising.com/newmedia/docs/American/Activities/Activity10.pdf</a> )	22

# SKILLS AND THE FUTURE OF WORK

“There are certain keywords in almost every job posting that relate to skills: communication, multitasking, teamwork, creativity, critical thinking and leadership. These words represent a secret language that few job hunters understand. The ones who do “get it” are also the ones who get the job offers. That’s because these keywords and phrases represent the skills that enable you to do your job well, whatever that job may be. They are known as transferable skills because no matter what the job or profession is, they make the difference between success and failure.” [Martin Yate, Forbes](#)

“One of the most popular narratives in the employment market today is that a “Skills Gap” exists between the abilities employers seek in successful candidates and the capabilities that new college graduates have gained through postsecondary education.

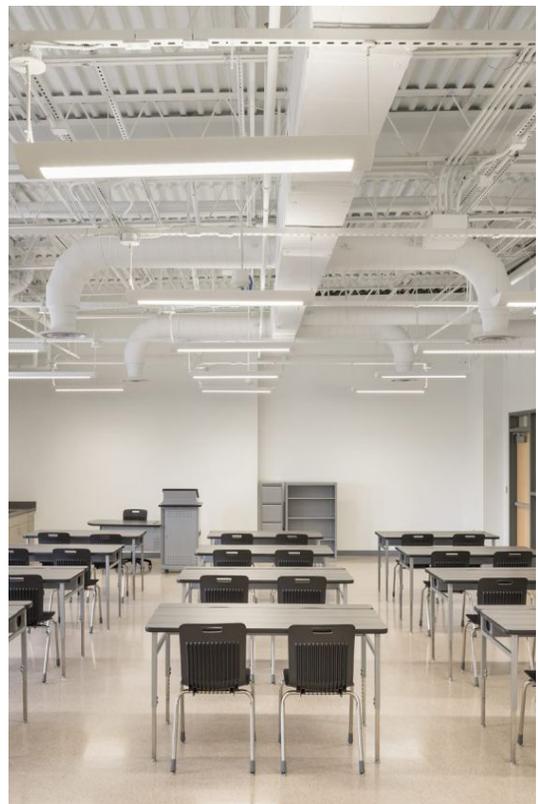
But what if we told you this well-understood reality is a little more than fiction, and that a gap of another sort does exist. We call it the “awareness gap.” Simply put, this is the inability for

college graduates to make employers aware of the skills they actually have. College graduates’ skills are not visible to employers because while they’re leaving colleges and universities with transcripts and resumes, employers aren’t able to see the skills they’ve developed through coursework and co-curricular activities.”

[Ryan Craig and Troy Markowitz, Forbes](#)

77 percent of employers believe applicants should highlight their soft skills just as much as their hard skills.

[CareerBuilder](#)





## TRANSFERABLE SKILLS SYLLABUS STATEMENT

**We encourage faculty to insert the below statement  
(or something similar) into all syllabi.**

Identifying the transferable skills you acquire in your courses, jobs and internships, co-curricular involvement, and other experiences is important to your career development and success. In this course, you will hone and build soft and technical skills that are important to employers, and it is your responsibility to highlight these skills in your resume, cover letters, interviews, and your digital presence - like your LinkedIn profile. For assistance identifying and providing evidence of these skills, visit [careercenter.depaul.edu](https://careercenter.depaul.edu) to make an appointment to meet with a career advisor or access digital resources.

# TRANSFERABLE SKILLS



## Critical Thinking

Raise vital questions. Generate well-reasoned conclusions and solutions.



## Resourcefulness and Adaptability

Deal well with new or difficult situations and find solutions to problems. Learn new information quickly. Change directions, if needed, to solve problems.



## Influence and Persuade

Persuade or induce someone to follow a course of action. Proactively shift the thinking, actions, and even the emotional state of other people.



## Professionalism and Work Ethic

Accept and demonstrate that good results require hard work, a sense of responsibility, an emphasis on quality, a high level of commitment, and drive.



## Decision Making

Define the problem, challenge or activity. Generate an array of solutions. Select, implement, and assess.



## Communication

Speak clearly to convey messages in a calm and focused way. Articulate thoughts, ideas and messages in order to educate, influence or persuade.



## Multicultural Competence

View the world from other's perspectives. Respect and value other cultures and differences. Develop a tolerance for ambiguity.



## Teamwork and Collaboration

Work with others to reach a collective objective by sharing knowledge, learning and building consensus. Demonstrate reliability by following through on group tasks.



## Problem Solving

Use knowledge, facts, and data to effectively solve problems, analyze issues or make decisions. Use logic and be resourceful.



## Creativity + Innovation

Combine knowledge from different areas to produce unique ideas or solutions. Use imagination, visualization, design, aesthetic, social and literary talents.



## Leadership

Leverage the strength of others towards the achievement of a common goal. Manage emotions and overcome adversity.



## Technology

Demonstrate knowledge and experience with computer hardware and software. Select and use appropriate technology to accomplish a given task.



## Research

Develop and refine search strategies, evaluating sources as to accuracy, validity, appropriateness for needs, importance, and social and cultural context.

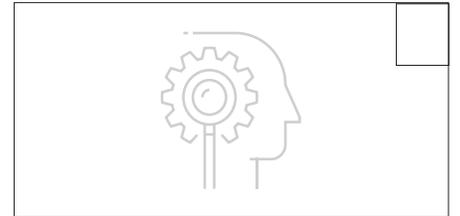
# TRANSFERABLE SKILLS WORKSHEET

Transferable skills, sometimes referred to as soft skills, are those critical strengths, talents, qualities, and personable attributes that go beyond the job-specific skills that you are gaining in your academic classes or internships.

Transferable skills can be:

- Acquired in a variety of different settings both on and off campus.
- Developed in class projects, extracurricular activities, sports, volunteer and community service experiences, internships, and past work experience.
- Qualities, talents, and attributes that you naturally possess.

**Instructions:** Check the top 5 skills you possess and generate at least one example of a time you demonstrated that skill in a work environment, classroom, personal project, or other experience. Identify the 3 skills you would like to practice more in the coming quarter and, in those boxes, write down a project you could take on to hone that skill.



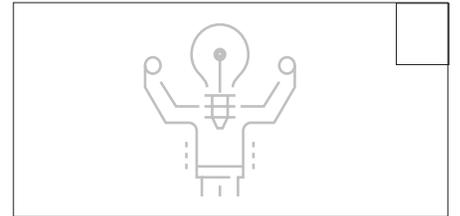
Critical Thinking



Decision Making/Ethical



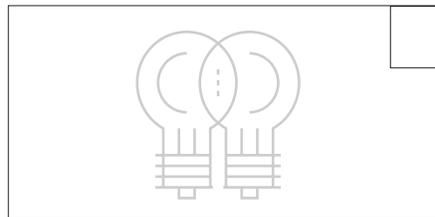
Problem Solving



Resourcefulness/Adaptability



Communication Skills



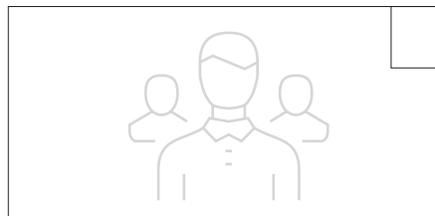
Creativity and Innovation



Influence and Persuade



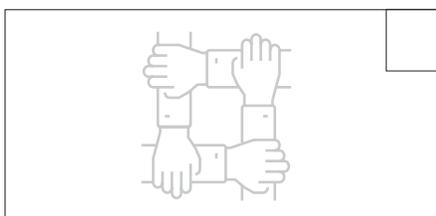
Multicultural Competence



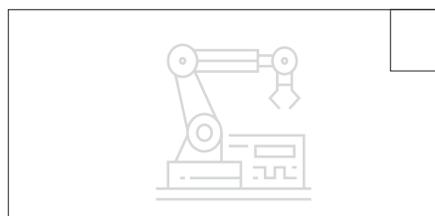
Leadership



Professionalism/Work Ethic



Teamwork/Collaboration



Technology



Research

# TRANSFERABLE SKILLS ON THE RESUME



## Activity Introduction

Transferable skills are skills that transfer from one environment to another such as home, school, work, service, or extracurricular activities. On a resume, it is important students provide examples of how they have used skills in previous experiences.



## Related Learning Outcomes

Have the ability to articulate transferable skills obtained through various past experiences by describing how certain job duties, volunteer experiences, etc. led to the development of these skills.

## Activity Instructions

**1**

..... Briefly introduce transferable skills. Refer to the activity sheet and ask the class to complete the form.

**2**

..... Have students fill out the information on the flowchart:

1. Students should start with one class project or assignment
2. Have them break down the major tasks that they performed
3. Students then divide each task into the skills that they acquired

Mapping experiences will help students think about job descriptions for résumés, responses to interview questions, and phrases for cover letters.

Students should concentrate on the broader and relevant skills that employers are seeking.

**3**

..... Ask students to share with a partner one transferable skill and an example of how they used this skill.

## Conclusion

Resumes should clearly communicate the transferable skills students have acquired. Encourage students to visit the Career Center to have a Career Advisor help them identify and convey those skills.

**Project:**

**Task:**

**Task:**

**Skill:**

**Skill:**

**Skill:**

**Skill:**

**1**

..... Identify a project you recently completed.

**2**

..... What did you do? Who were you interacting with? List the major tasks that you performed in this role.

**3**

..... Consider what skills you acquired from performing those tasks and complete the chart. If you need help, please consult the transferable skills matrix.

**4**

..... Find a partner and share the project you choose, one skill you acquired or enhanced, and an example of how you used the skill.

**Summary:** It is important to describe your experience in terms of tasks and transferable skills so that employers fully understand how and what you accomplished.

# Transferable Skills and Accomplishment Statements

Here are some examples of how other students have demonstrated these skills through class projects, internships, volunteer work and part-time jobs. Review these examples to help identify and describe your own experiences using these skills.

## WRITING

*translate, write, compose, edit, craft, revise, draft*

- Identified prospective donors and wrote grant proposals to help support K-12 after-school enrichment programs
- Conceptualized and drafted material for organization's marketing brochure

## COMMUNICATION

*convey, correspond, engage, publicize, connect, influence, mediate, negotiate, present, promote, teach, train, explain*

- Trained new employees on company's procedures and processes
- Serve as liaison to campus community as president of the Creative Arts Club and present to various campus groups to increase awareness on campus

## LEADERSHIP

*initiate, spear-head, establish, launch, implement*

- Initiated and developed the concept for "Evening Art Walk," an event where creative arts students can showcase their final senior projects
- Spear-headed planning for the Global Studies' commencement ceremony as part of the student leadership team

## FLEXIBILITY

*adapt, acclimate, adjust, modify, familiarize*

- Demonstrated adaptability while providing excellent customer service as shift leader in a busy retail environment while managing other various work priorities

## TEAMWORK

*collaborate, partnership, contribute, discuss*

- Collaborated with team of five for class project to research and design curriculum for after-school program to meet needs of multicultural student populations
- In partnership with 15 classmates and faculty, successfully organized and planned "Green Careers Week," a career information event for students

## INTERPERSONAL

*cultivate, develop, foster, interpret, understand, relate*

- Counseled and advised diverse populations while working as a peer advocate in the Health Center
- Tutored and mentored high school students at Youth Works, an afterschool enrichment program for under-represented youth

## ANALYTICAL

*investigate, observe, discern, perceive, consider, evaluate, assess*

- Assist in the evaluation and assessment of potential candidates for all administrative support openings as human resources intern
- Review account ledgers and balances to ensure accurate billing and financial analysis

## MULTICULTURAL

*collaborated on a team with students from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds*

- Effectively collaborated with peers and faculty from various socio-economic and cultural backgrounds to develop a presentation on how cross-cultural values affect communication in business environment

**PROBLEM SOLVING**

*clarify, strengthen, solidify, improve, increase, resolve*

- Improved access to health care services for qualifying community members by coordinating monthly team meetings with lawyers, physicians, and social workers to efficiently process approvals

 **ORGANIZATION**

*prepare, goal setting, coordinate, direct, manage, arrange, meet deadlines, deliver*

- Organized and brought together local artists from all over the San Francisco Bay Area for fundraising and promotional events
- Provided organizational support to staff including managing schedules, supply purchasing, filing, preparing development materials, and coordination of meetings

 **COMPUTER SKILLS**

*program, design, compute, build, develop*

- Created and maintained donor database using Raiser's Edge Software including processing all financial donations (individual grants and corporate pledges)
- Designed organization website and published online reports and articles

 **CREATIVITY**

*conceptualize, design, create, invent, generate, draft, formulate, devise*

- Conceptualized and developed an on-going project for ESL students resulting in a publication of the student's autobiographical works for use as a learning tool for ESL teachers
- Created visual concept for Poets and Writers Coalition's magazine launch
- Designed innovative advertising materials for Annual School of Social Work Fair which contributed to a 25% increase in attendance from the previous year

 **ATTENTION TO DETAIL**

*organize, edit, focus, concentrate, review*

- Developed agenda, scheduled speakers, and organized discussion groups as coordinator for a 4-day international student conference
- Edit copy for student newspaper and ensure that grammar, layout and content are accurate

 **CRITICAL THINKING**

*critique, evaluate, review, measure, examine, problem solving*

- Identified prospective donors and wrote grant proposals to help support K-12 after-school enrichment programs
- Conceptualized and drafted material for organization's marketing brochure

 **GLOBAL AWARENESS**

*global consciousness, cultural competency and awareness, forging common*

- Developed international counseling experience while participating in a summer internship at the University of Zambia
- Founded an International Student Mentoring Program where domestic and international students are paired for a semester in order to foster awareness, inclusion and understanding of each other

 **DESIGN AND PLANNING**

*forecast, develop, prepare, calculate, project, anticipate, propose, outline, create*

- Developed four year plan for incoming freshmen to support student success as part of student leadership project
- Prepared annual budget based on analysis of previous year's costs and revenues as the student assistant for operations manager on campus
- Designed innovative advertising materials for Annual School of Social Work Fair which contributed to a 25% increase in attendance from the previous year

# CASE STUDY

## Integrating Transferable Skills in Learning Outcomes

### Sample Course:

### *Community Development, Engagement and Advocacy*

By the end of the course you will be able to:

1. Identify structural, institutional, and historical forces that may impact communities
2. Communicate, advocate, and work collaboratively with community members to enhance public health initiatives
3. Design and carry out community engagement activities
4. Understand the challenges faced by some communities and identify the ways in which these challenges can be addressed and resolved in respectful and empowering manner
5. **Develop or improve the following professional skills: initiative, responsibility, leadership, teamwork, conflict resolution, problem solving, decision-making, and written and oral communication**

# Assignments

## Assignment 1 - Your Professional Skills

You will be asked to submit 500-700 word reflection that clearly demonstrates how you successfully used a professional skill in this course so far. For example, you can identify a teamwork skill as one that you developed by getting input from all group members before presenting your ideas to the class. In addition to this reflection, you will submit a supporting digital artifact that demonstrates your professional behavior.

You will:

- Write a 500-700 word reflection that clearly demonstrates which professional skill you used in the course
- Select a supporting digital artifact that gives evidence of one professional behavior related to this skill
- Submit a draft of Assignment 2 to receive peer feedback.
- Give peer feedback on other students' submission in class
- Revise and resubmit Assignment 1



## Assignment 2 - Community Engagement Project:



The goal of this project is to provide you with an opportunity to experience community work and to develop your written and oral communication skills, as well as **teamwork, leadership, initiative, responsibility, and problem-solving skills**. You will form groups of 3-4 students to work collaboratively on designing and implementing a community-based activity. You need to identify a project that can be carried out by you in a relatively short period of time. You can utilize your personal networks, your knowledge of your own community, or online space to work on your project. The outcome of this activity can be anything from a well-designed pamphlet to a community-organized meeting or a viable twitter account/Facebook page. The community engagement project will be summarized in two parts:

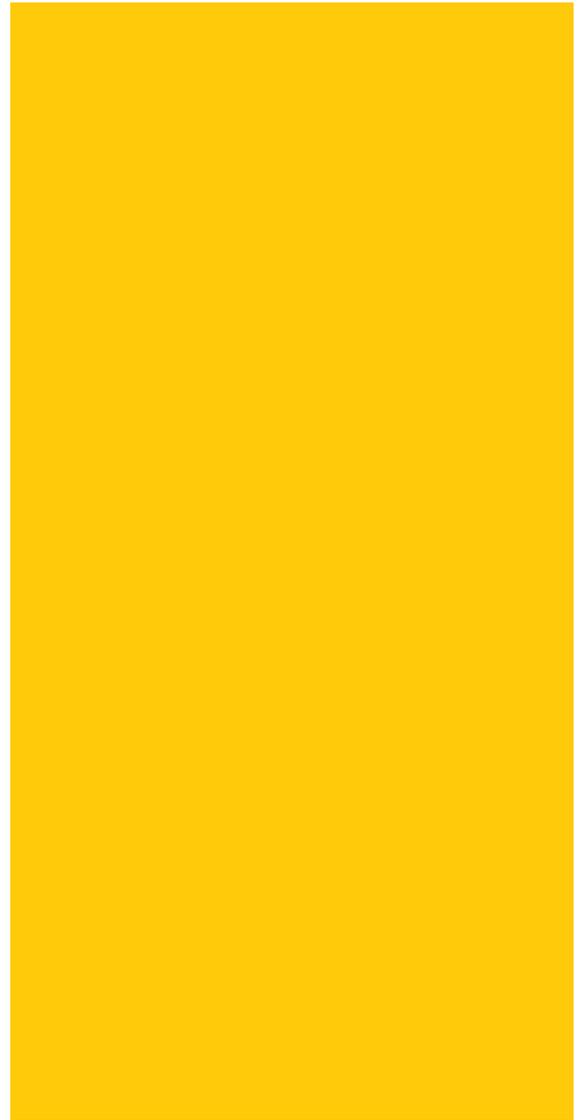
### Final Project Report

Your group will submit a final report of 8-10 pages that will include the following components:

- Executive summary – a brief summary of the project, including: a rationale for the project, goals, activities, and outcomes.
- Introduction – the rationale and the goals, brief outline of community in which the intervention took place, and anticipated outcomes.
- Background – background on the community, including demographic information and community ecology.
- Intervention – rationale for the proposed intervention and activity including a background on the activity and step-by-step implementation process.
- Reflection/Lessons learned – identify what has worked or has not worked and how this intervention/activity could have been implemented in other setting(s) to improve public health.
- Summary – summarize your work and identify what you have accomplished, how this advances public health, and future direction for research/ intervention.
- Style/References – your paper should have a title and reference page. You are welcome to use academic and grey literature but you need to ensure that you have at least 3 academic references per 1 group member.

### Class Presentation

Your group will summarize your project in a 10-minute presentation to the class. The goal of the presentation is to provide you with an opportunity to demonstrate your critical thinking and oral communication skills and allow other students to learn about your project. The sign-up sheet for presentations will be circulated in class.



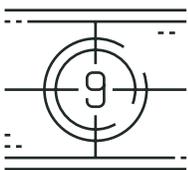
# EXERCISES

These exercises offer students the opportunity to practice identifying and articulating their transferable skills using distinct lenses and strategies.

## Skills Hero: The Story of Your Skills

**1**

Students begin by identifying a fictional character who embodies a particular skill and describing a way this skill is demonstrated in a film, novel, or TV show.



## Visualizing Skills: Mapping and Planning Your Skills Future

**2**

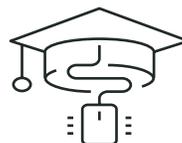
Students use a mindmap to generate a list of skills they possess now and a plan to acquire new skills in the future.



## About Me: Your Skills and Your Digital Brand

**3**

Students start by answering some “About Me” prompts and end by drafting the story of their personal brand.



## I Did What? Cataloging Skills from Your Everyday

**4**

Students use the “A Day in My Life” grid to outline and identify what skills they practiced in the course of any particular day.



# Skills Hero: The Story of Your Skills

## Who is your skills hero?

Spiderman has robust skills in **problem solving**. He is also a great **team player** with an excellent **work ethic**!

1

Use the chart below to identify a fictional character or historic person who possesses each of the five skills provided.

### Communication

Name:

### Collaboration

Name:

### Influence and Persuade

Name:

### Creativity and Innovation

Name:

### Resourcefulness and Adaptability

Name:



**2**

..... For each "skills hero," identify a time he/she demonstrated this skill or competency.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Communication



Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Collaboration



Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Influence and Persuade



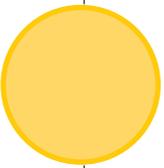
Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Creativity and Innovation



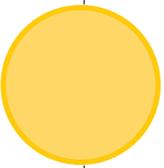
Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Resourcefulness and Adaptability

**3**

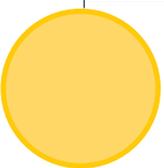
..... Finally, identify 3 skills you possess and describe a time you practiced each skill.



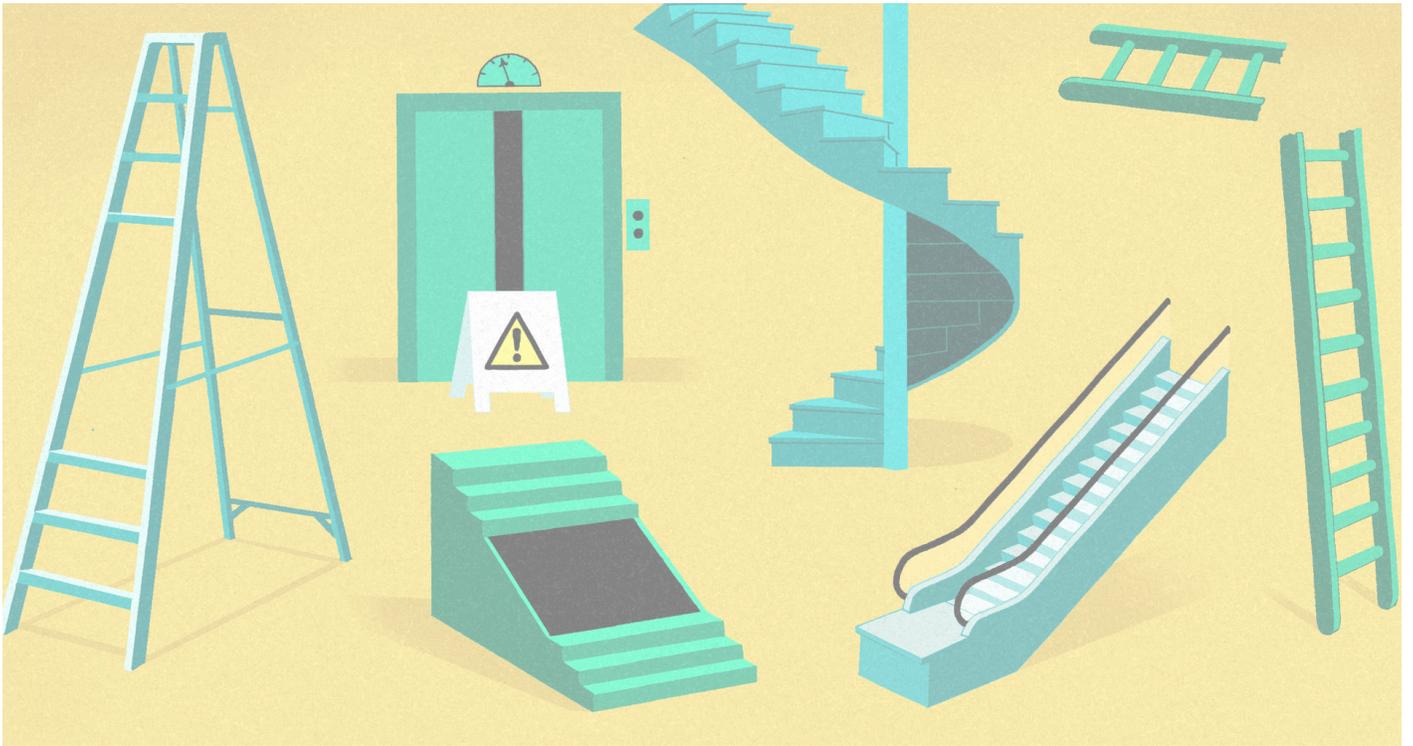
Skill: \_\_\_\_\_



Skill: \_\_\_\_\_



Skill: \_\_\_\_\_



# *Visualizing Skills:* Mapping and Planning Your Skills Future

1

## Map skills.

If you're like most students, many of your skills were learned by chance depending on the classes you took, and not as an entirely deliberate choice. But if you want to invest your electives or free time learning skills that will be valuable to you, you don't want to learn skills at random. You must take control and learn things that will help you go in the direction of your choice.

To know what's missing, you must first map out what skills you do have. Use the attached mindmap (or design your own) to outline the skills you have acquired thus far.

2

## Color code your skills.

### Core Skills (in purple)

Those are the skills that you use every day and that you must master.

### Satellite Skills (in blue)

Those skills are still important, but they're not a must have for everyone and may vary according to your experience and the projects you're working on.

### Helper Skills (in turquoise)

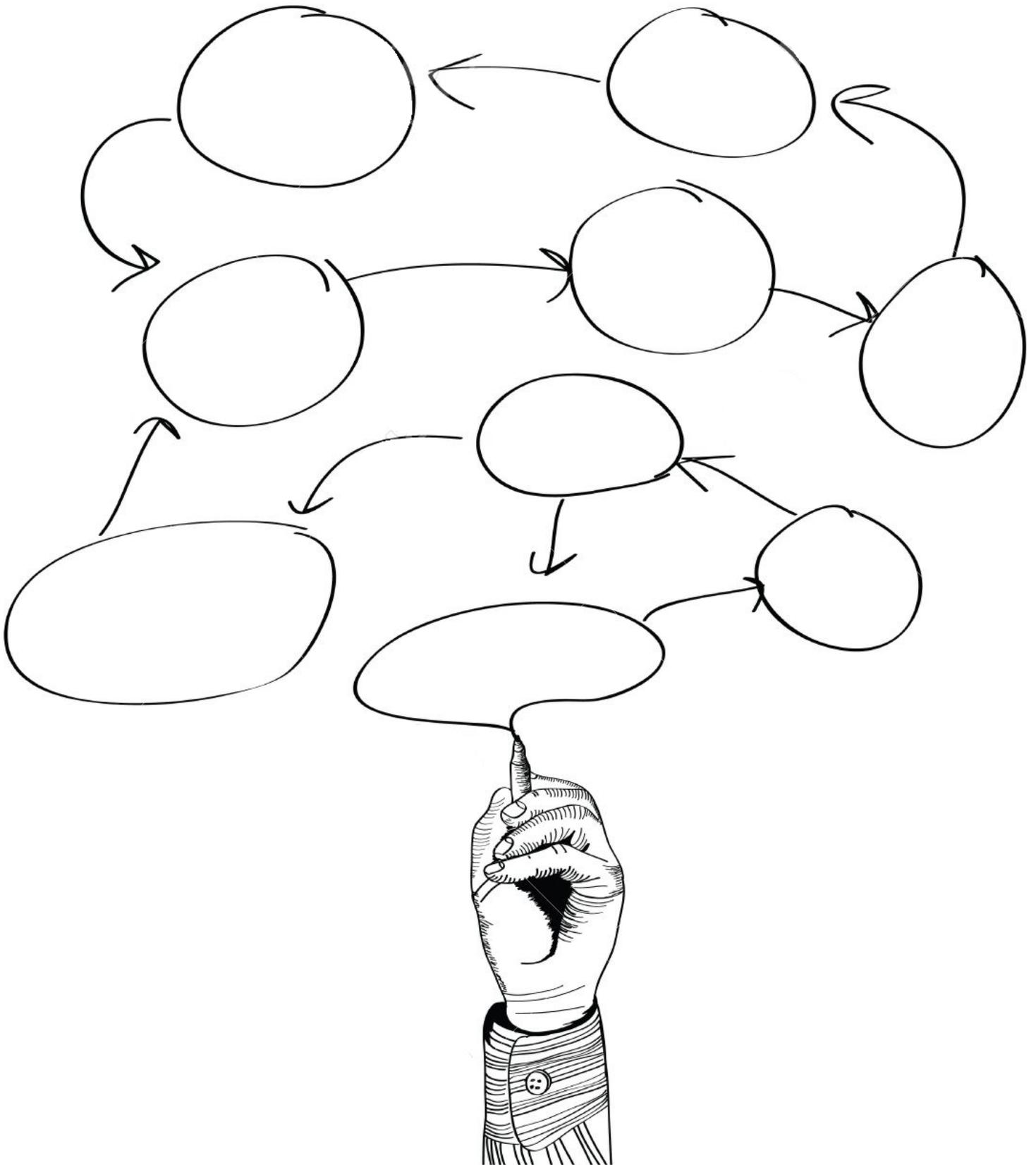
Those skills are not directly related to your core skills or satellite skills, but they are valuable as a way to solve problems that are not directly related to your skillset.

3

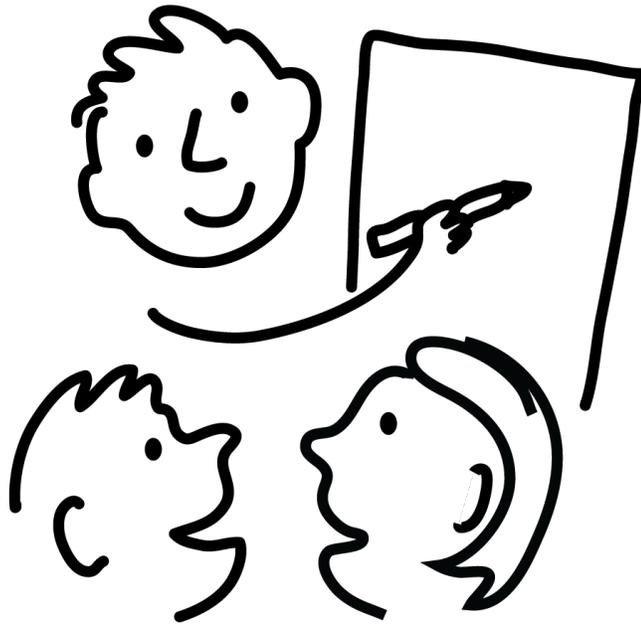
## Analyze the map.

Just by writing down this map, you'll probably notice some areas where you are weaker and need to put in some work, and missing skills you should learn. Unfortunately, maybe you'll find out that you what you mapped is not close to where you want to go and that you're due for a total overhaul. In that case, you'll need to work on building a new map to help you go in the right direction.

But, in any case, which skill should you learn next? When you're choosing to learn a new skill, you should focus on something that will make the rest of your skills stronger and more valuable.



# About Me: Your Skills and Your Digital Brand



1

## Reflection

**Start with some questions.**

About pages are hard. You have one page to summarize who you are, what you do, and how you're different in a clear, concise, and confident way. No big deal! Think of your About page as a way to introduce yourself. It doesn't need to be exhaustive. Find a balance between being personal and professional, and try to have some fun. This is a great time to step away from the computer, put your self-critic aside, and do some exploratory writing to take the pressure off.

2

## Biography

**Write a short bio.**

About pages don't have to be cutesy or clever. A simple bio with concrete facts goes a long way. Tell us who you are, where you're from (if it matters to you), where you live, and what you do. What are you most proud of? This isn't your CV, so don't worry about outlining every job you've ever had. Summarize your biggest accomplishments. Don't be afraid to get personal, especially in your bio. After all, if someone reads this, they've expressed an interest in you as a person.

3

## About Me

**Put it all together.**

Move the elements around and see what you can leave out. Focus on answering questions you'd expect from your audience.

If you're stuck, look at sites from other people and companies in your field. See how they present their work and levels of experience. How do the words make you feel? See what you can learn from their choices and the way they talk to readers.

## Start with some questions.

Give yourself at least two minutes with each of these exercises.

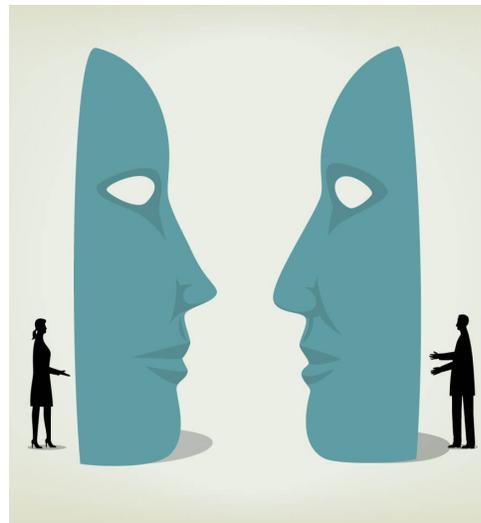
- Where do you see yourself in one to three years?
- How does your work and skills fit into the world you want to live in?
- What kinds of projects interest you? (It sometimes helps to list tasks you want to stop doing first.)
- What kinds of people do you want to work with? Who are your dream clients?
- What do you want people to do after visiting your website (e.g., hire you, subscribe to your blog)?
- If someone were telling a potential co-worker about you, what would you want them to say?

## Write a short bio.

Pick a small section of your About page to begin with. A quick Mad Libs exercise can help you write your bio. Look back at your notes as you fill in the blanks.

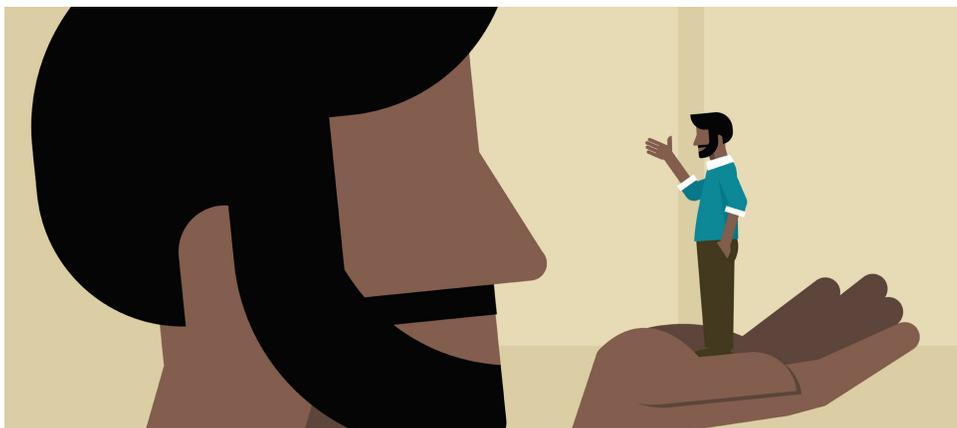
I'm a \_\_\_\_\_.  
I help \_\_\_\_\_ {make/build} \_\_\_\_\_.  
When I'm not \_\_\_\_\_, you can find me \_\_\_\_\_.

Want to work together? I'd love to hear from you.



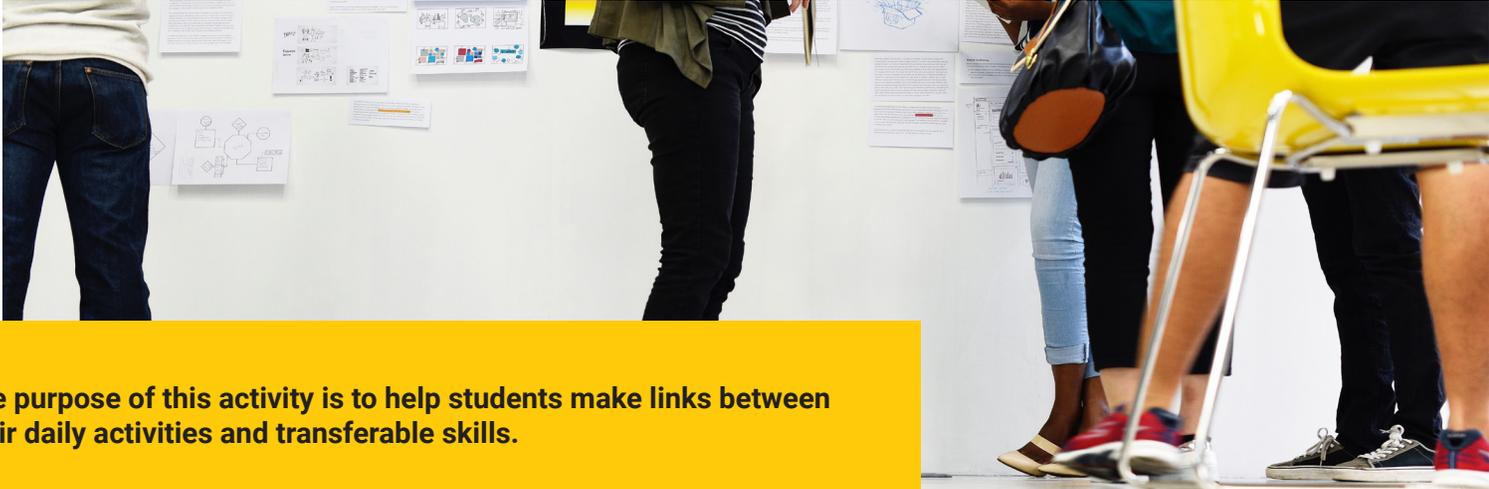
## Put it all together.

- Start off strong with a magnetizing headline
- Make your target audience and value proposition (what you do) extremely clear
- Share more about yourself: Be personal, vulnerable and human
- Include images of yourself to connect with your audience and to be more memorable
- Prove that you know what you're talking about (prove your credibility) by talking about your skills, personal experiences, past achievements etc.
- Keep it short and sweet. Check over your main points. Is the most important information at the top? Don't overcomplicate things with hefty phrasing.
- Read it out loud. Editing is about listening, so listen to your writing.



# *I Did What?*

## Cataloging Skills from Your Everyday



The purpose of this activity is to help students make links between their daily activities and transferable skills.

In particular, they will:

- \* See the importance of their curricular and extracurricular activities
- \* Gain a better understanding of their skills
- \* Practice providing evidence of soft skills via storytelling

### 1

#### Inventory Your Day

Fill in the A Day In My Life chart. In the Activities column, write down the things you do in a typical day. Be sure to include all classes, sports, social events, clubs, hobbies, chores, after school jobs, etc.

### 2

#### Transferable Skills

Identify and write down the transferable skills that match your activities (put the transferable skills beside each activity, in the right-hand column).

### 3

#### Storytelling

Now pick three of the activities from the A Day In My Life chart and draft a 3-4 sentence paragraph describing how you practiced the transferable skill. Tell the story with this format: SKILL + what you DID + RESULTS/OUTCOME

Time	Activity	Transferable Skills
<i>example</i>	<i>worked on group presentation for English literature class</i>	<i>Teamwork, Collaboration, Creativity, Research</i>
7:00 am - 8:00 am		
8:00 am - 9:00 am		
9:00 am - 10:00 am		
10:00 am - 11:00 am		
11:00 am - 12:00 pm		
12:00 pm - 1:00 pm		
1:00 pm - 2:00 pm		
2:00 pm - 3:00 pm		
3:00 pm - 4:00 pm		
4:00 pm - 5:00 pm		
5:00 pm - 6:00 pm		
6:00 pm - 7:00 pm		
7:00 pm - 8:00 pm		



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