

Identifying Your Transferable Skills

Are you a Team Player, Problem-Solver, Leader, or Great Communicator?



Figure 1: Several Transferrable Skills

<http://www.dreams-goals.com/resources/workshops/wkshp-transferable-skills/>

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Contents

Overview	1
Learning Outcomes	1
What Are “Transferrable” Skills?	1
Technical Skills	1
Transferrable Skills	2
Why Are Transferrable Skills Important?	2
Talent vs. Skill	5
Talent vs. Skill to Reach Full Potential	6
How to identify your transferrable skills	7
Follow Up Activities	8
Visit: Career Services Center	8
Assessments to Identify Skills	8
Workshops	8
Individual Career Counseling	8
Classes	8
Handouts	8
A Place To Begin: MicroSkills	9
How Do You Develop Your Transferrable Skills?	10
Wrap Up	11

Overview

Participants will learn what transferrable skills are. They will know how to identify many transferrable skills they have developed as a result of their innate abilities, education, work experience, and life experiences. Participants will also receive information about how to find potential jobs/careers that need such transferrable skills.

Learning Outcomes

Participants will:

- Know the difference between skill and talent
- Know the difference between technical skills and transferrable skills
- Know why transferrable skills are important
- Know how talents can be developed into a skill
- Understand how to develop transferrable skills
- Identify current transferrable skills
- Identify desired transferrable skills
- Know how to identify jobs which need specific transferrable skills

What Are “Transferrable” Skills?

When thinking about skills you have to offer a potential employer, it is important to understand that there are two different types of job skills: Technical skills and Transferrable skills.

Technical Skills

Technical skills are those skills you need to do a specific job. However, if you were going to change occupations to something very different, these are the skills you may not likely need in your new job. Examples of some kinds of technical skills are as follows:

- Nurses knowing how to take blood pressure
- Auto mechanics knowing how to overhaul an engine
- Computer programmers knowing computer languages (JAVA)
- Accountants producing a “Profit & Loss” statement

These are the kind of skills most people think of when considering going to school to develop job skills. These are often the skills emphasized in the marketing of those training programs as well and probably listed as a “minimum required skills” for an entry-level job. Sometimes employers will be willing to train individuals on these skills needed – especially if these technical skills are highly specialized and training on such skills is only offered through limited sources such as the manufacturer of the equipment being trained to operate.

Technical skills are the skills that will most likely need to be updated on a routine basis due to advances in technology and operational processes designed to make the job process more efficient.

Transferrable Skills

Technical skills are those that will not be of much use when going into a new profession; and transferrable skills are those skills you can take with you when you do change professions. These are the skills you will need regardless of whether you are a nurse, mechanic, computer programmer, or an accountant because you will need these skills in many different jobs.

The following is a brief list of skills you may use in many different jobs:

- Self-Management skills (*punctuality, self-discipline, managing emotions, focus on the task at hand, etc.*)
- Productivity, industriousness, and a general ability to get the job done
- Verbal and written communication
- Working with people (handling conflict, etc.)
- Organizing information, data, people or things
- Researching data
- Analyzing numbers, trends, cause and effect processes
- Trouble shooting and problem solving
- Using technology (*i.e. computers, Internet, etc.*)
- Driving a car

Transferrable skills can be developed through formal education, and / or a variety of other environments. Options for developing transferrable skills will be discussed later.

Why Are Transferrable Skills Important?

Transferrable skills serve several functions in today's world. They:

- **The true value of a college degree:** The true value of a college degree is in the transferrable skills gained more than the technical skills for the reasons listed below:
 - **Are universal:** Unlike technical skills, transferrable skills can be useful in a variety of settings – including many different types of jobs. They can also be useful in your family, social, leisure lives. They allow you to do more and to help you accomplish goals.
 - **Make you more employable:** The more skills you have, the more jobs you are qualified to do. Transferrable skills can open doors to many different types of jobs.
 - **Are important to include on your resume:** By identifying your transferrable skills, you will be able to set yourself apart from other candidates who are not aware of their transferrable skills.
 - **Make you a more attractive candidate:** In today's competitive employment market, it is crucial to tailor your resume to the job posting. Often job postings will include a combination of technical and transferrable skills as part of its list of "minimum qualifications" or "desired qualifications." The more of those qualifications you can list as possessing, the better your resume will look.
 - **Make you more adaptable:** Having transferrable skills means that when you enter a new job or other environment, you don't have to start from the beginning. You enter the new environment already knowing how to do certain functions, and

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you can rely on those familiar skills while you learn to develop ones which you currently lack.

- **Are necessary in a world of job uncertainty:** We are living in a world where everything is changing so fast, that no one can truly or accurately predict what tomorrow's job market will look like in 10 – 20 years. One trend reveals that employers are valuing transferrable skills more than ever because when employees possess transferrable skills, they can adapt with changing demands in the market. *(See “How Skills Relate to Career Success” below.)*
- **Can help you get jobs in different fields:** In today's worlds, skills, jobs, industries, and trends come and go. Technical skills that were in-demand 10 or 20 years ago, may no longer prove marketable in today's world. Technical skills developed for today will not likely be marketable in 10 or 20 years from now. So when you find yourself needing to get a new job in a new field, you will still have something to offer potential employers when your current technical skills can no longer help you get a job. *(See “How Skills Relate to Career Success” below.)*

- *Video: **The Human Resources Recruiter and the English Major***
- *http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_KliVFCZlV0&feature=player_embedded*

How Skills Relate to Career Success

It is important to understand how skills relate to career success because we are currently living in a world of constant change. Understanding what is likely to change, verses what is likely to stay stable is crucial to being able to maintain employability over a long period of time.

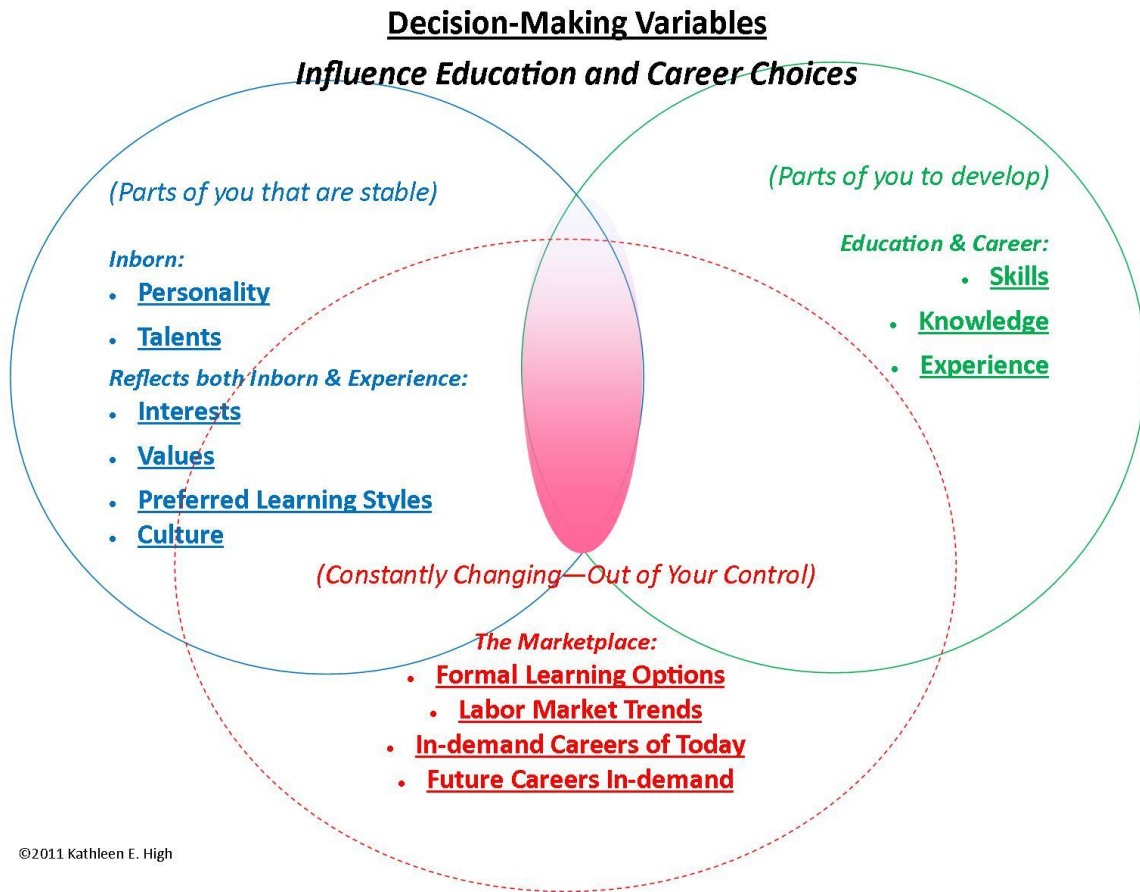


Figure 2: Image "Decision-Making Variables": Parts that are stable; Parts to develop; & Constantly Changing - Out of Control

The image above, titled “Decision-Making Variables”, illustrates that there are several different factors which affect how people make education and career decisions. Most people will make their decisions on any combination of the following variables:

1. **Parts of you that are stable** (*unlikely to change much*)
 - a. Parts of you that are **Inborn** (*you do not control*)
 - i. Personality
 - ii. Talents
 - b. Reflects both Inborn tendencies and your personal Experiences (*both inborn and controllable*):
 - i. Interests
 - ii. Values
 - iii. Preferred Learning Styles
 - iv. Culture
2. **Parts of you to develop** (*you can control*)
 - a. Education and career
 - i. Skills
 - ii. Knowledge

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iii. Experiences

3. **Constantly Changing** (*out of your control*)
 - a. Formal learning options
 - b. Labor market trends
 - c. In-demand careers of today
 - d. Future careers in-demand

In decades past, the common thinking was, “find a good job and you will be set for life” (Section 3 above) because the world was much more stable than it was today. In those days, this was a reasonable expectation.

Unfortunately, today’s culture still tends to look for the job to provide stability. However, this figure shows which of those decision-making variables offers stability and which do not.

Talent vs. Skill

People often have a difficult time distinguishing the difference between talent and skill. They may not know the difference; may assume you are either born with an ability to do something or you are not; or they may confuse talent with skill and vice versa.

Talent: In-born, natural, does not require much effort. A person who is naturally talented can reach minimum proficiency in the activity without training.

Skill: A person who reaches minimum proficiency only through training and practice. An acquired skill can compensate for lack of natural talent.

Q: Is it possible to have both talent and skill in something?

A: Yes: By building on natural talent through education, training and practice. (See figure below.)

Talent vs. Skill to Reach Full Potential

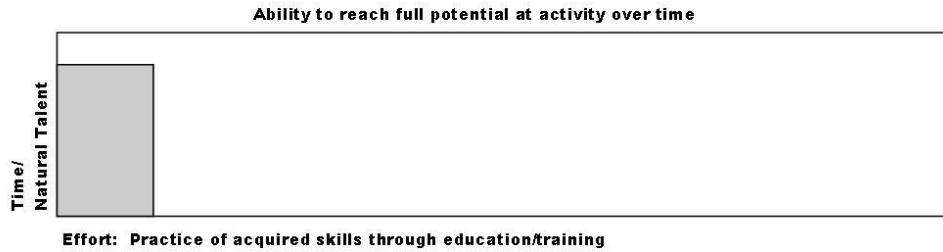
Self-Awareness: Environmental Influences

Talent and Skill in Reaching Full Potential

A person's ability to reach their full potential at a given activity will depend on two variables: 1) Natural talent or ability at the task, and 2) Practice or development of skill at the activity through education/training.

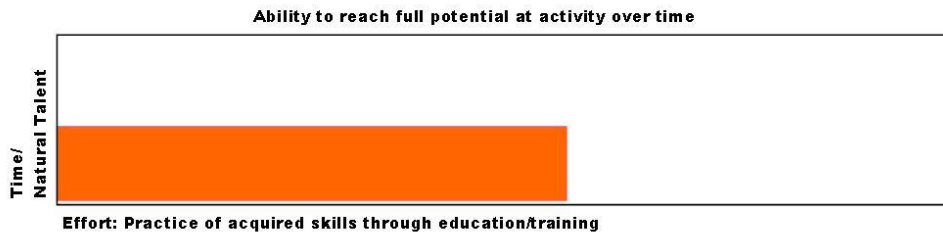
Scenario 1: Talent without Practice/Skill

A person who has natural talent for the task will find that initially learning to do the task becomes easy, but without education/training and practice, will be limited in their ability to reach full potential.



Scenario 2: Practice/Skill without Talent

A person who lacks natural talent for the task, but acquires the skill, can eventually compensate with skill acquired through education/training and practice. He or she will find that initially learning to do the task may be hard, but will eventually be able to achieve at least a minimum level of skill needed to function. Yet, their ability to reach full potential will ultimately be limited by lack of talent.



Scenario 3: Talent Combined with Practice/Skill

A person who has natural talent, and chooses to develop that natural ability through education/training and practice, will excel beyond those with talent or skill alone.

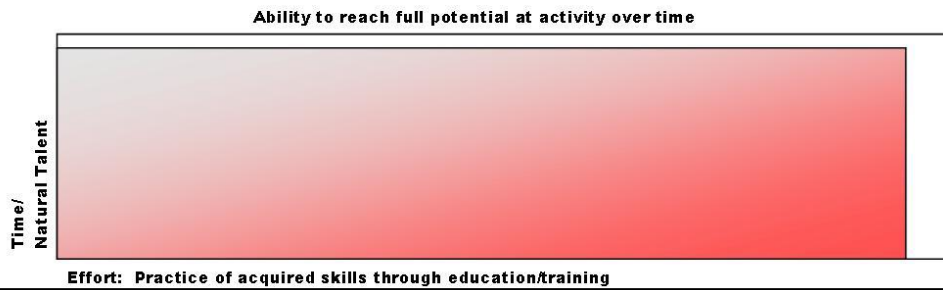


Figure 3: Talent vs. Skill in Reaching Full Potential

How to identify your transferrable skills

At this point, you may be asking how to identify your transferrable skills. One way is to recognize how they are acquired.

Personality: Our personality is in-born. By virtue of your in-born personality, you will be more inclined to engage in one style of interaction than another. For example, some people are naturally inclined to engage in critical thinking skills; some to be naturally inclined to work well with other people; some to be naturally inclined to be efficient and productive producers; and others tend to be very good at adapting and responding to the needs of the moment.

Talents: Because of our in-born personality and our natural inclination to be attracted towards certain activities, we have likely developed certain natural talents into strengths. Often it can be difficult to identify certain skills because we assume that because we do something well, it is common sense and therefore everyone can do well what we do well. However that is not true. By the very virtue of your in-born personality, you are predisposed to be talented at one activity; and are likely weak in an activity which requires an opposing ability. Also in contrast, you will find there are people who are weak where you are strong; and strong where you are weak.

Your Environment: The environment in which you grew up will have a significant impact on your skill development. The following are some environmental factors which impact potential skill development. Take a few minutes to think about any skills you may have developed as a result of the following experiences: *(The document “True Self” goes into more detail on this.)*

- Upbringing – family life _____

- Generation _____

- Hobbies _____

- Education _____

- Work _____

- Military _____

- Volunteering _____

Follow Up Activities

There are several resources available which should be useful to someone wanting to identify and develop their transferrable skills.

Visit: Career Services Center

Visit the Career Services Center for the following activities.

Assessments to Identify Skills

Come to the Services Center to get started on the following assessments to help you identify your transferrable skills.

- **MicroSkills**
Assessment which helps you find jobs which require the use of a preferred set of transferrable skills and is available in the Career Services Center
- **Myers Briggs (MBTI)**
Identifies personality and related strengths which can be cultivated into transferrable skills.
- **Campbell Interest and Skill Survey (CISS)**
- **StrengthsFinder**
Not available through the Career Services Center. Must purchase a book which will give you access to take the assessment online.
<http://strengths.gallup.com/110659/Homepage.aspx>
- **Values in Action**
Not available through the Career Services Center. Must purchase a book which will give you access to take the assessment online.
<http://viacharacter.org/www/>

Workshops

Check in with the Career Planning Center for upcoming career workshops.

Individual Career Counseling

- Make appointment through the Counseling Center to see a counselor.

Classes

If you take any of the following classes, they can help you identify potential transferrable skills and how to find occupations which require such skills.

- COUN 2 – College Success Strategies
- COUN 5 – Career/Life Planning
- COUN 51 – Career Planning

Handouts

Some of the following handouts have already been presented in class.

- Generational Values
- True Self

A Place To Begin: MicroSkills

Take a few moments to go through the MicroSkills assessments to identify some transferrable skills which you would prefer to use on a job. This assessment identifies 72 potential transferrable skills in areas of:

- Self-Management
- Situational Skills
- Detail Skills
- Movement Skills
- Operational Skills
- Numerical Skills
- Communication Skills
- Conceptual Skills
- Judgment Skills
- Reasoning Skills
- Interpersonal Skills
- Leadership Skills

Here are some additional transferrable skills not identified by the Microskills assessment:

- **Adaptability** (*adjusting your attitudes, expectations, priorities, and contributions based on changing needs*)
- **Care Giving** (*providing for the needs of others – especially those that are dependent: children, elderly, sick, disabled, etc.*)
- **Diversity** (*able to work with, value, and serve individuals whose backgrounds, values, and experiences are different from your own*)
- **Driving** (*operating cars, buses, vans, and other transportation vehicles*)
- **Event Planning** (*planning, managing, and coordinating the details involved in putting together public events*)
- **Hospitality** (*serving others and creating a welcoming environment for guests and visitors*)
- **Learner** (*continually searching for new knowledge, facts, and understanding*)
- **Listening** (*able to take the time to accurately hear and understand what a person says without projecting your own thoughts/feelings on to that person and respond appropriately way*)
- **Mirroring** (*to mimic, imitate, or reflect someone/something accurately*)
- **Multi-lingual** (*able to speak, read, and/or write in more than one language, including sign language*)
- **Networking** (*able to build a large and broad list of people from a variety of backgrounds and skill sets, introduce them to each other as appropriate, and to develop a mutually beneficial relationships with those connections.*)
- **Observation** (*objective and accurate awareness and/or recording of situational environments, circumstances, events, facts, details, and/or behaviors*)
- **Other-focused** (*an ability to set aside one's personal needs, agenda, and priorities and instead focus on someone else's needs agenda and priorities.*)
- **Patience** (*able to wait until the circumstances are right to take action*)

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- **Public Speaking/Performance** (*able to stand in front of an audience to speak, perform, entertain, and/or inform*)
- **Resourcefulness** (*able to find resources and solutions, to address needs and/or answers to questions*)
- **Readiness/Preparedness** (*always being ready for the unexpected or emergency situations by having a minimum of basic supplies [money, food, clothing, equipment, documents, supplies, resources, training, etc.] available at any given time to allow for an immediate response to the emerging situation.*)

How Do You Develop Your Transferrable Skills?

You may realize that you want to develop some transferrable skills that you do not yet already possess. The handout, “True Self” gives a detailed explanation of how your various environmental-shaping factors affect your personality and skills development. This handout can also give you some ideas of environments you can create to develop some specific transferrable skills.

If you want to develop your transferrable skills, the good news is there are several ways you can do that. The following are different options for identifying opportunities for developing your transferrable skills.

- **Work:** Find job that allows you to develop those skills.
- **Education:** Find classes, academic programs, professional development workshops, continuing education programs that help you develop a needed skill.
- **Internships:** Find an employment training opportunity that will develop a needed skill.
- **School Activities:** If you are a student look for extracurricular activities, such as joining clubs, work study, volunteering or assisting faculty or campus programs that give you the skills you are looking for.
- **Military:** Joining the military is a great way to develop many transferrable skills; and they often have some very good training opportunities.
- **Volunteer Opportunities:** Check out your local non-profit organizations, community service and even your local place of worship for opportunities to get involved in something that interests you. Volunteer activities can provide relevant and appropriate skills and experiences to list on a resume.
- **Leisure Activities:** Where and how you spend your free time can offer you potential opportunities to develop transferrable skills.
- **Community Activities:** This is similar to volunteering mentioned above. Find a cause you care about and get involved. You will find many opportunities to develop various transferrable skills.

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- **Family Life:** How you interact with others in your family and social life can develop transferrable skills. You may find these situations provide opportunities to develop leadership, hospitality, adaptability, and/or care giving skills.

Wrap Up

If you are not sure where to begin next, remember there is help. Make an appointment to see a counselor through the Counseling Center. (909) 274-4380. Student Services Center. 2nd Floor.

Identifying Your Transferrable Skills *Related Handouts*

Thank you for attending the “*Identifying Your Transferrable Skills*” workshop. We hope you received answers to your questions and received important information to help you achieve your goals.

Handouts Provided At The Workshop:

- MicroSkills (*assessment*)

To follow up on what you learned today, some additional materials which should be of interest to you:

Recommended Additional Handouts:

- Generational Values
- Decision-Making Variables
- True Self
- Labor Market Trends
- Lifelong Learning Options
- Reaching Career Goals