Transferrable skills

Dr Olivia Leung (AC)
Sir David Santandreu (EDO)
Intended Learning Outcomes

identify the keys characteristics of transferrable skills,

describe the advantages of learning transferrable skills,

apply this knowledge to integrate transferrable skills into courses/modules/curriculum and create in-class activities to boost students’ portfolio.
How would you define **Transferrable skills**?
Transferable Skills are non-job specific skills which can be used in different occupations.

- Organizational skills
- Communication Skills
- Research skills
You may have developed them through course work, jobs, internships, exchange programmes, volunteering, or just plain life experience.
Are they important? If yes, why?
What’s so important about transferrable skills?

Increasing focus on employability of graduates and recognition of importance of transferrable skills at European and national levels

Employers look for these skills in our graduates

Results in students taking a more active approach to learning and thus greater responsibility for their own development
Transferrable skills link to careers
12 steps to success in corporate life

- Build co-operative relationships
- Influence upwards
- Communicate with clarity
- Be efficient
- Become a team player
- Make good decisions every time
- Take charge of development

SCMP, August 2008
Written communication and interpersonal skills might be helpful in public relations.
Problem solving, critical thinking, human relations and leadership skills might be helpful in a managerial position.
Can you think of other transferrable skills?

Take a moment and write a few down.
Here are some additional ideas

Team building skills
Public Speaking skills
Computer skills
Teaching skills
Creativity skills
Analysis and Decision-making skills
Time management skills
Do we really need TS?
To get a job
“The basic skills which society requires education and training to deliver are those which give an individual a secure foundation for life and work. They thus cover vocational and technical skills, as well as social and personal competencies.”

Education Council of the European Union (2001)
“I think society is getting more competitive, Ten or 20 years ago all you needed was knowledge of your chosen profession but now people look at the way you serve them, the way you present yourself. Professionals need to develop their `likeability' - the soft skills that make good first impressions.”

Desmond Chan, image consultant and president of Image de Monde, Hong Kong
“McDonald's is a people business, not just a restaurant serving hamburgers. If you want to be a success in the industry, knowing how to serve customers and work as a team is very important”

“Applicants will have an advantage if they show they can work with people from all walks of life”

Victor Kwan Wang-hei, Mc Donald’s Senior Director of Human Resources and Training Learning and Development
“The prerequisite for potential recruits is simply that they are prepared to build new skills, can absorb the necessary information and are keen to master the intricacies of the financial services industry…

For an exciting career with transferrable skills, look no further than the financial services industry.”
“Clients in the commerce industry prefer candidates with the kind of highly transferrable skills learned and trained at one of the Big Four accounting firms, who understand the regulatory environment with project management experience”

Dora Pang, consultant of Commerce Accounting Division at Robert Walters Hong Kong
“Successful business analysts are typically **good communicators** and possess **strong analytical and presentation skills**. Employers look for **detail-oriented candidates** who are able to **manage multiple tasks and meet tight deadlines**. **Problem-solving skills are also crucial to the job**”

Michael Curtis, Manager of Commerce and Industry Recruitment at Ambition, a recruitment specialist covering Hong Kong, Singapore, Australia and Britain.
To change jobs
“Being a journalist gave me many transferable skills, including strong communication, analytical and presentation skills. Now I will begin my career in equity research, where I can use all the skills I've accumulated.”
“Talent crunch forces a change in policies. Companies today are increasingly prepared to recruit people from other sectors who have the necessary transferrable skills.

Candidates who can show they have experience and skills which can be adapted for use in a new role stand a genuine chance”

Levina Poon, Associate Director, Banking and Finance Division.
“The soft skills of leadership become more important in middle management.”

Betty Yuen, Managing Director CLP Power
Hong Kong
At a job interview, a candidate may be asked questions that seem unrelated to the position available.
Such questions are asked because the interviewer is looking beyond the candidate's qualifications and track record in the search for someone who also will be the right match for the organization.
Questions about personal interests or work experience are designed "to gauge the candidate's level of fit".

In general, prospective employers are looking for transferrable executive skills.
Interview questions will therefore focus on three areas:

1. **technical knowledge** (education, qualifications and experience),
2. **relevant transferrable skills**, and
3. **future focus**.
To improve and get promoted
Fancl's Noel Kiu {Human Resources Director} believes that good teamwork is the best way to provide the best service to customers.

Staff working at the supervisory level receive training on time management, key performance indicators (KPI), and how to motivate and coach their subordinates.

Managerial staff are trained in strategic planning and financial management to make sure they are competent leaders.
"Our flight attendants are indeed very special people," says Quince Chong, CX's general manager of inflight services.

They are highly trained ambassadors, safety experts, and caregivers.

“The work nurtures problem-solving skills and interpersonal sensitivity”

Her background in communications and public relations in the hotel and tourism industries has prepared Ms. Chong for this operational role.

Recognising her highly transferrable skills, CX promoted Ms Chong in 2000 to head up in-flight services.

Ms Quince Chong, General Manager of in-flight services
Realising the hotel industry is an international business, Alfred Yuen decided to align his education and training to the evolving demands of the industry.

"I could have chosen to study in Hong Kong, but instead I chose to study in Australia where I would also be able to experience a different culture while improving my language skills" Alfred Yuen, Sheraton Hong Kong Hotel and Towers administrative assistant - housekeeping
“Today's accountant needs to be able to communicate with the CEO, company investors, the board of directors and people in general,". Although there are new and more complicated accounting standards, it is not difficult to acquire the necessary technical skills, but it can be difficult to apply them in the business world," "This requires what we might call a three-dimensional accountant for the new era”
Knowing how business works, being organisationally savvy, and having people skills and leadership skills are the new competencies most in demand. For the past 20 or 30 years, we have been studying how some people get promoted and others don't. Certainly, technical ability is very important, but often the deciding factor is soft skills."

Andrew Tsui, Chairman of recruitment firm Korn/Ferry International (Hong Kong)
“Environmental managers have to be versatile and perceptive enough to see issues from all-round perspectives, especially internal integration of environmental and other business objectives and operations, community needs and public expectations.

They also need good soft skills to communicate and present themselves well. Technical knowledge is becoming less important than these attributes.”

Victor Kwong Chiu-ling, corporate health, safety and environment manager for Towngas
“The storied banking giant's [Lehman brothers] demise was an illustrative lesson for the industry and for academics — one that may lead to lasting changes in business-school curriculums”

Awi Federgruen, chair of the Decision, Risk and Operations Division at Columbia Business School.
Time magazine, September 08
"People shouldn't bury themselves in the mathematics, because the mathematics are only tools. One needs to have a wide and robust vocabulary to talk about risk, simply because no single mathematical formula is going to capture all of what risk is."

Kenneth Froot, Professor at Harvard Business School
Making transferrable skills explicit in the Curriculum
What does the integration of skills actually mean?

Approaches to skills development within the curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total embedding</th>
<th>Explicit integration</th>
<th>Parallel development</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lose skills without trace</td>
<td>Visible skills</td>
<td>“Bolt on” development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Skills disappear in context</td>
<td>Skills in context</td>
<td>Limited contextualisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>No explicit assessment</td>
<td>Explicit assessment</td>
<td>Separate assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low impact on curriculum</td>
<td>High impact on curriculum</td>
<td>Low curriculum impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivery by lecturer</td>
<td>Delivery by lecturer</td>
<td>Delivery by teaching assistant / student services / elearning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lesser understanding of relevance of studies</td>
<td>Understanding of relevance of studies</td>
<td>Lesser understanding of relevance of studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>No extra time commitment from student</td>
<td>No extra time commitment from student</td>
<td>Extra time commitment from student</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Guile & Leney, 1997
Different levels of integration into academic courses

**HIGH**
- Adapt/design skills materials for use in class
- Integrate existing skills materials into class work
- Integrate existing skills materials into subject for students to use outside the class
- Write skills into learning outcomes
- Mention skills being developed in class through activities being undertaken

**LOW**

Not all skills need to be developed in all courses – should be balanced across all years of programme
“Entrepreneurship is not necessarily something we can teach in a classroom, rather these requisite practical skills and mindset are something students must discover by engaging in entrepreneurial activities similar to those found in the real world”

Raymond Lau Yiu-keung, assistant professor, Department of Information Systems, CityU
The Standard, September 2008
Four students from the Faculty of Business have excelled in the **Young Leaders Development Programme 2008** organised by the AIA Foundation, taking home the Most Outstanding Young Leader Award and the Best Report-Writing Award.

“All participants in this training programme were outstanding students, so it was not an easy task to compete with them. **The key to our success was the cooperation of all team members,**” said Helen. “An individual’s strength and knowledge is limited but when we unite, that power exceeds our expectations.”
Identify the skills and qualities of a graduate required by City University, School, Department or Programme
On graduation, CityU students will be able to

**RELATE**
Cultural awareness to collaborate effectively in a broad range of teamwork situations

**REFLECT**
On the ethical and social responsibilities required of professional citizens in a global society

**APPLY**
Multi-disciplinary critical thinking skills to solve problems and create new ideas

**GENERATE**
A positive and flexible approach to lifelong learning and employability

**APPLY**
Effective communication, language, numerical and IT skills to a variety of professional settings

Academic Development Proposal
2009/12
What about in your programme/Course?
Questions

1. What **key study/other skills** do your modules/degree course require?
2. What skills **would you like your students to gain** from their degree?
3. Do you **tell them**? How do you make it clear that you value these skills?
4. What is the **current level in these skills** of your first-year students on entry?
5. What do **you/your department** provide in the way of skills training?
6. Do you feel that this is adequate? If yes, what **evidence** do you have of its effectiveness?
# A simple Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course title</th>
<th>Transferable skills taught</th>
<th>Discipline-specific skills taught</th>
<th>Teaching methods used</th>
<th>Assessment methods used</th>
<th>Action plan</th>
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</table>
Identifying Transferrable Skills

working with people

working with things

working with information and data
Ask students to **identify the TS they have**

**Management/Administrative Skills**

Think about the skills you have used to organize and coordinate people, projects and events. Can you:

Plan and arrange

Delegate responsibility

Bring order out of confusion

Attend to visual detail

Assess and evaluate your own work as well as that of classmates or coworkers

Use databases or software to organize and present information

Remain flexible-see obstacles as a challenge rather than a setback

Manage multiple tasks

Identify and manage ethical issues
Communication Skills

To succeed in your courses or on the job, you must be able to communicate what you know, either orally or in writing. Can you:

Listen-answer questions, provide information, accept input

Write correspondence, reports, records, and technical or specialized documents

Present information to large and small groups

Persuade-give recommendations, convince others to adopt your ideas

Negotiate-settle disagreements, or help others to see all sides of a situation

Read or speak another language

Express yourself confidently and creatively

Communicate electronically-use the web and email to present and exchange information
Hand-out 1  Employability skills
(for students)
In class: problem-solving and teamwork

Exercise 1:
Throughout the course you will work with other students as a team. Describe your previous experiences in group learning. What have you liked/disliked about group projects? Write one personal goal that could help to make the experience positive.

Exercise 2:
You are in the middle of problem solving and getting ready to do experiments. Describe your sense of confidence in your team’s ability to solve problems. Feel free to use the following questions as guides for your thinking: How do you feel about the team’s efforts? How well is your team able to identify issues, set goals, and define problems? Would you recommend any changes to the team’s approach?

Exercise 3
1. Provide an example of a time when the team was effective or ineffective.
2. How has working on a team influenced your learning? How has working on a team influenced your thinking about your role on a team?
Exercise 4
One of the objectives of the course is to improve your knowledge about how you learn.
Describe how your experiences thus far have influenced your thinking about problem solving and how you best learn.

Exercise 5
Describe the ways in which this course affected your learning in each of the following areas: Knowledge of the content of the discipline, critical thinking, written and oral communication, teamwork, problem solving, other.

Exercise 6
1. Describe how you have integrated your understanding of various concepts to enhance your learning and develop problem solutions.
2. How has your approach to problem solving changed throughout the course?
3. What aspects of the course helped you develop your problem solving skills?
4. What aspects of the course could be improved? How can these areas be improved? As a result of the course, how prepared do you feel to address new problems?
Top 10 skills in order of importance

1. Oral communication
2. Time management
3. Team work
4. Presentation skills
5. Coping with multiple tasks
6. Managing one’s own learning
7. Written communication
8. Planning
9. IT skills
10. Decision making
Top 10 skills in order of level of development

- Oral communication
- Research skills
- Written communication
- Presentation skills
- Critical thinking
- Team work
- Analytical ability
- IT skills
- Managing one's own learning
- Coping with multiple tasks
The incorporation of transferrable skills will not necessarily always involve reorganisation or addition to existing subject requirements, as many of the TS are probably already there (previous slide) in the curriculum, even if they have not been explicitly identified.
Hand-out 2  Audit of employability features
ILOs

How should they be written as a learning outcome in an OBTL context?
One way of doing it would be to say something like this in a course document:

"(At the conclusion of this course/subject/programme) students should have improved their ability to communicate orally."
Another example:

"(By the end of this course/subject/programme) students should be better able to work as members of a team."
TLAs

Transferrable Skills +
Academic Knowledge
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>ATs</th>
<th>TS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peer Learning: PDA</td>
<td>Instant PDA feedback</td>
<td>IT skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly On-line Assignment</td>
<td>Instant on-line feedback</td>
<td>Time-management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly problem sets</td>
<td>Submit Answers to teachers; Marked by teachers (if available)</td>
<td>Problem-solving skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Study Group Project</td>
<td>Group Reports; Marked by teachers</td>
<td>Teamwork skills/Leadership Research skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation of Teaching Materials</td>
<td>Powerpoint file or notes or concept maps; Marked by teachers</td>
<td>Creativity skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real-life Case Study</td>
<td>Examination; Marked by teachers</td>
<td>Analytical skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Presentations</td>
<td>Presentation and reports; Evaluated by teachers</td>
<td>Teamwork Decision-making skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>→ See example</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debate</td>
<td>Debate; Evaluated by teachers</td>
<td>Presentation/negotiation skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video Production</td>
<td>Video; Evaluated by teachers</td>
<td>Design/Creativity skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Outside Classroom Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Assessments</th>
<th>TS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflections after study tour, exchange program, and internship</td>
<td>Reflection report; Reviewed by staff-in-charge (if available)</td>
<td>Reflective skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal goal-setting</td>
<td>Report; Reviewed by mentors (if available)</td>
<td>Writing skills Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Reading Skills Workshop</td>
<td>No follow up</td>
<td>Critical thinking skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“How to improve English” Workshop</td>
<td>No follow up</td>
<td>Language skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview skills workshop</td>
<td>Mentors (if available) or else at interviews for real…</td>
<td>Presentation skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resume writing skill workshop</td>
<td>Resumes; Reviewed by mentors (if available)</td>
<td>Writing/Analytical skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Professional Images workshop</td>
<td>Mentors (if available) or else at business occasions</td>
<td>Presentation skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business and Table Manner workshop</td>
<td>At Business Dinners with mentors or else at real business occasions</td>
<td>Business skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
On the right track....
Just need to fine tune

Plan Ahead with a **new emphasis**
Target at training up and **integrating** transferrable skills

Design Assessments
Considered **delayed and repeated assessments** for transferrable skills

Provide qualitative as well as quantitative feedback
  - Feedback on **transferrable skills may need to be made in words** in addition to giving out a score.
  - **Bring students’ attention** to their transferrable skills by providing comments and advise directly.
Example: Group Presentation

Give feedback on TS

Oral communication skills
- Engaging audience / Persuasiveness
- Audience oriented
- Fluency in English
- Comprehension of questions / appropriateness (answers)

Teamwork skills
- Allocation of labor – Team Roles (See Belbin, 1981)
- Building team spirit
- Creating common goal / Collective decisions/adjusting/conflict resolution
Cognitive psychologists argue that students learn most effectively if they are taught skills in the context in which they will use those skills.

“...we tend to lose track of what it is like in the real world, and kids are asking us what do I need to know this for?...I can now come back with a specific example of a specific application.”
Learn how to *communicate* the skills you have

If you had to ask students to “communicate” in writing form or at an interview the TS they have, *which relevant questions would you ask them to answer?*
To be noticed by potential employers, students need to realise that it is important to know how to market themselves and differentiate themselves from the competition.
To impress potentials employer they need to emphasise their unique selling points including their strengths, work experience, industry knowledge, contacts, skills, abilities and successes, and quote examples that matter most to the company's objectives or vision.
Relevancy is the key word here
Learn how to communicate the skills you have

Describe a situation in which you had to draw a conclusion quickly and take immediate action.

Describe a time when you had to work with a group to get something accomplished.

Describe a situation where you felt it necessary to be attentive to your environment.

Tell me about a time in which you were very persistent in order to reach your goals.

Describe the most difficult person you ever had to work with.

Describe a time when you felt it was necessary to modify or change your actions in order to respond to the needs of another person.

Give me an example of an important goal you set and tell me about your progress in reaching it.

Describe the most significant written document, report, project, or presentation that you've completed.
Examples of TS “selling”

Campus computer-lab assistant seeking position in consulting

My work-study position as a computer-lab assistant involved solid knowledge of the technology within the labs, the ability to teach that technology to fellow students, and the skills to assist those who had problems with the software and hardware. To me, that's what consulting is all about — possessing the knowledge to teach and assist clients and the interpersonal skills to do so successfully.
Server in restaurant seeking entry-level marketing position

In addition to my marketing coursework, I have employed marketing and customer-service skills in the restaurant field. In my most recent position, I marketed appetizers, desserts, and other add-ons to customers and added value to their dining experience. I would like to apply the same sales savvy and interpersonal skills in the marketing position you have open.
Types of transferable and discipline-specific skills being taught and the range of teaching methods being employed.
Hand-out 3  auditing skills within an individual course
2. Assessment

Assessment of skills.

2.1 Are transferable skills assessed?

2.2 What methods are used to assess transferable skills?

*Please indicate if these are formative (F) and/or summative (S) assessment methods.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill being assessed</th>
<th>Method of assessment</th>
<th>Formative (F) / Summative (S) / Both</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Written communication</td>
<td>Select</td>
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<td>Select</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oral communication</td>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>Select</td>
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<tr>
<td>Problem-solving</td>
<td>Laboratory report</td>
<td>Select</td>
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<tr>
<td>Team work</td>
<td>Field report</td>
<td>Select</td>
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<tr>
<td>Information handling</td>
<td>Other report</td>
<td>Select</td>
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<tr>
<td>Information Technology skills</td>
<td>Project</td>
<td>Select</td>
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<td>Numeracy</td>
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<td>Career management</td>
<td>Oral presentation</td>
<td>Select</td>
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<td>Select</td>
<td>Poster presentation</td>
<td>Select</td>
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<tr>
<td>Written communication</td>
<td>Literature review</td>
<td>Select</td>
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<td>Select</td>
<td>Critique</td>
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<td>Debate</td>
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<td>Calculations</td>
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<td>Exam</td>
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</table>
3. **Feedback**

Feedback methods used in the module.

3.1 What feedback methods are used within the module?

*Please indicate how these relate to the type of assessment (i.e. formative (F) and summative(S)).*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feedback methods</th>
<th>Formative (F) / Summative (S) / Both</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Written:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Oral:</strong></td>
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4. **Information**

Information within module description forms (MDF) regarding skills teaching & learning.

4.1 Is the module description explicit in terms of the range of skills learning opportunities within the module?

4.2 In setting the learning outcomes is consideration given to the learning outcomes in other concurrent or previous modules regarding skills teaching and learning?

4.3 Do you see any value in providing a comprehensive list of the skills that will be developed within a module being explicitly communicated in the MDF?
Hand-out 4    Integrating skills into a particular module/course
Suggested procedure for integrating skills

Identify skills & qualities of a graduate required by University / School / Department / Programme

↓

Conduct skills audit on programme

↓

Identify any gaps in skill development and most appropriate places in programme in which to fill gaps

↓

Identify suitable material / resources (if required) for integration into curriculum
Assessment of skills

Some skills easier to formally assess than others (e.g. presentation, IT skills)
Better to specify levels of competence for skill if assessing
Need to include in learning outcomes if assessing
Can only assess what is taught; if not taught, then cannot or difficult to assess
Create reflective process as part of assessment?
Questions are welcome