NSSE 2024 Topical Module Report
Development of Transferable Skills

University of Kentucky

Adapted from a pilot survey that was developed by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, this module examines activities that develop useful and transferable skills for the workplace and beyond (such as verbal and written fluency, critical thinking, creative thinking, problem solving, project management, and time management). The module complements questions on the core survey about higher-order learning, reflective and integrative learning, and students' perceptions of their development in a variety of areas.

Comparison group details are in the online Selected Comparison Groups report, linked in the Data & Reports table on the Institution Interface. A PDF copy is also saved in your report download folder.

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First-Year Students

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values[c]	Response options	Frequency Distributions[a]				Statistical Comparisons[b]		
				UK		Dev Transfer Skills		UK	Dev Transfer Skills	
				Count	%	Count	%	Mean	Mean	Effect size[d]
1. During the current school year, whether course-related or not, about how often have you done the following?										
a. Discussed or debated an issue of social, political, or philosophical importance	TRNdebate	1	Never	231	17	908	19			
		2	Sometimes	584	42	1,876	41			
		3	Often	387	28	1,222	27	2.4	2.3	.04
		4	Very often	177	13	633	13			
			Total	1,379	100	4,639	100			
b. Made a speech to a group	TRNspeech	1	Never	141	10	1,379	30			
		2	Sometimes	633	46	1,857	41			
		3	Often	393	28	937	20	2.5	2.1 ***	.43
		4	Very often	211	15	463	10		▲	
			Total	1,378	100	4,636	100			
c. Worked in a group with people who differed from you in terms of background, political orientation, points of view, etc.	TRNgroup	1	Never	52	4	273	6			
		2	Sometimes	437	32	1,627	36			
		3	Often	602	44	1,857	40	2.8	2.7 ***	.14
		4	Very often	286	21	878	18		△	
			Total	1,377	100	4,635	100			
d. Discussed the ethical consequences of a course of action	TRNethical	1	Never	143	10	726	16			
		2	Sometimes	560	41	1,890	41			
		3	Often	462	33	1,443	31	2.5	2.4 ***	.18
		4	Very often	214	16	575	12		△	
			Total	1,379	100	4,634	100			
e. Evaluated the credibility of information sources	TRNcred	1	Never	43	3	300	6			
		2	Sometimes	416	31	1,460	32			
		3	Often	583	42	1,851	40	2.9	2.8 ***	.12
		4	Very often	336	24	1,018	21		△	
			Total	1,378	100	4,629	100			
f. Discussed complex problems with others to develop a better solution	TRNcomplex	1	Never	50	4	339	8			
		2	Sometimes	443	33	1,656	36			
		3	Often	591	43	1,777	39	2.8	2.7 ***	.17
		4	Very often	291	21	855	18		△	
			Total	1,375	100	4,627	100			
g. Generated multiple solutions to a problem or task	TRNsolution	1	Never	39	3	247	5			
		2	Sometimes	430	31	1,571	34			
		3	Often	608	44	1,925	42	2.8	2.7 ***	.14
		4	Very often	300	22	880	18		△	
			Total	1,377	100	4,623	100			
h. Combined dissimilar concepts to create a novel idea	TRNcreate	1	Never	157	11	994	21			
		2	Sometimes	552	40	1,992	43			
		3	Often	464	34	1,171	26	2.5	2.2 ***	.31
		4	Very often	205	15	464	10		▲	
			Total	1,378	100	4,621	100			
i. Adapted a previously used solution to a new situation	TRNadapt	1	Never	83	6	453	10			
		2	Sometimes	482	35	1,824	39			
		3	Often	545	40	1,689	37	2.7	2.5 ***	.21
		4	Very often	263	19	647	14		△	
			Total	1,373	100	4,613	100			

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 (2-tailed); Refer to the endnotes page for the key to triangle symbols.

First-Year Students

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values[c]	Response options	Frequency Distributions[a]				Statistical Comparisons[b]		
				UK		Dev Transfer Skills		UK	Dev Transfer Skills	
				Count	%	Count	%	Mean	Mean	Effect size[d]
j. Referred to online content (tutorial, forum, webpage, etc.) to solve a problem	TRNonlsolve	1	Never	35	3	174	4	3.0	3.0	.02
		2	Sometimes	354	26	1,167	25			
		3	Often	562	41	1,824	40			
		4	Very often	419	30	1,454	31			
			Total	1,370	100	4,619	100			
k. Referred to online content (tutorial, forum, webpage, etc.) to learn a new skill or procedure	TRNonlskill	1	Never	34	2	166	4	3.0	2.9	.01
		2	Sometimes	385	28	1,257	27			
		3	Often	560	41	1,807	40			
		4	Very often	395	29	1,384	29			
			Total	1,374	100	4,614	100			
l. Used project management tools to plan, organize, or schedule tasks	TRNproject	1	Never	77	6	482	11	2.8	2.6 *** △	.18
		2	Sometimes	459	34	1,621	35			
		3	Often	535	39	1,641	36			
		4	Very often	303	22	868	18			
			Total	1,374	100	4,612	100			
m. Used a daily or weekly "to do" list	TRNtodo	1	Never	86	7	381	10	3.0	3.0	.00
		2	Sometimes	375	28	1,110	25			
		3	Often	381	28	1,094	24			
		4	Very often	534	38	2,027	41			
			Total	1,376	100	4,612	100			
n. Prioritized what tasks need to be accomplished	TRNtasks	1	Never	19	1	74	2	3.2	3.3 ** ▽	-.08
		2	Sometimes	255	19	725	16			
		3	Often	496	37	1,551	35			
		4	Very often	595	43	2,250	47			
			Total	1,365	100	4,600	100			
o. Worked longer hours than usual to meet deadlines (i.e., after midnight, before dawn)	TRNhours	1	Never	71	5	344	8	2.9	2.9	.00
		2	Sometimes	408	30	1,261	28			
		3	Often	446	33	1,363	30			
		4	Very often	449	32	1,651	34			
			Total	1,374	100	4,619	100			
p. Written something (paper, report, article, etc.) that used information from a variety of sources (books, journals, Internet, databases, etc.)	TRNwrsource	1	Never	33	2	185	4	3.0	3.0 * △	.07
		2	Sometimes	350	26	1,220	27			
		3	Often	528	38	1,691	37			
		4	Very often	464	33	1,513	31			
			Total	1,375	100	4,609	100			
q. Written something (paper, report, article, etc.) that assessed the conclusions of a published work	TRNwrassess	1	Never	100	7	564	12	2.8	2.6 *** △	.16
		2	Sometimes	440	33	1,565	35			
		3	Often	478	35	1,451	32			
		4	Very often	349	25	1,027	21			
			Total	1,367	100	4,607	100			

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 (2-tailed); Refer to the endnotes page for the key to triangle symbols.

NSSE 2024 Development of Transferable Skills

Frequencies and Statistical Comparisons
University of Kentucky

First-Year Students

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values[c]	Response options	Frequency Distributions[a] UK Count	%	Dev Transfer Skills Count	%	Statistical Comparisons[b] UK Mean	Dev Transfer Skills Mean	Effect size[d]
r. Written something (paper, report, article, etc.) that included ideas from more than one academic discipline	TRNwrideas	1	Never	106	8	624	14			
		2	Sometimes	454	34	1,647	36			
		3	Often	477	35	1,453	32	2.8	2.5 ***	.22
		4	Very often	335	24	884	18		△	
			Total	1,372	100	4,608	100			
s. Written something (paper, report, article, etc.) that presented multiple viewpoints or perspectives	TRNwrviews	1	Never	73	5	402	9			
		2	Sometimes	452	33	1,676	37			
		3	Often	521	38	1,566	34	2.8	2.7 ***	.16
		4	Very often	324	23	968	20		△	
			Total	1,370	100	4,612	100			

NSSE 2024 Development of Transferable Skills

Frequencies and Statistical Comparisons
University of Kentucky

Seniors

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values [c]	Response options	Frequency Distributions [a]				Statistical Comparisons [b]		
				UK		Dev Transfer Skills		UK	Dev Transfer Skills	
				Count	%	Count	%	Mean	Mean	Effect size [d]

1. During the current school year, whether course-related or not, about how often have you done the following?

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values	Response options	Count	%	Count	%	Mean	Mean	Effect size
a. Discussed or debated an issue of social, political, or philosophical importance	TRNdebate	1	Never	231	20	1,061	21			
		2	Sometimes	489	43	1,988	39			
		3	Often	261	23	1,227	25	2.3	2.4	-.04
		4	Very often	169	14	807	16			
			Total	1,150	100	5,083	100			
b. Made a speech to a group	TRNspeech	1	Never	215	19	1,192	23			
		2	Sometimes	530	46	2,127	42			
		3	Often	278	24	1,106	22	2.3	2.2	.03
		4	Very often	131	11	659	13			
			Total	1,154	100	5,084	100			
c. Worked in a group with people who differed from you in terms of background, political orientation, points of view, etc.	TRNgroup	1	Never	45	4	279	6			
		2	Sometimes	336	30	1,586	32			
		3	Often	478	41	1,958	38	2.9	2.8 **	.10
		4	Very often	292	25	1,261	24		△	
			Total	1,151	100	5,084	100			
d. Discussed the ethical consequences of a course of action	TRNethical	1	Never	130	11	681	14			
		2	Sometimes	450	39	1,913	38			
		3	Often	391	34	1,632	32	2.5	2.5	.02
		4	Very often	180	16	859	17			
			Total	1,151	100	5,085	100			
e. Evaluated the credibility of information sources	TRNcred	1	Never	65	6	319	6			
		2	Sometimes	351	31	1,443	29			
		3	Often	442	39	1,908	37	2.8	2.9	-.04
		4	Very often	290	25	1,411	28			
			Total	1,148	100	5,081	100			
f. Discussed complex problems with others to develop a better solution	TRNcomplex	1	Never	51	4	344	7			
		2	Sometimes	323	28	1,415	28			
		3	Often	479	41	1,989	39	2.9	2.8	.06
		4	Very often	298	26	1,341	26			
			Total	1,151	100	5,089	100			
g. Generated multiple solutions to a problem or task	TRNsolution	1	Never	34	3	238	5			
		2	Sometimes	324	28	1,428	29			
		3	Often	487	42	2,076	40	2.9	2.9	.06
		4	Very often	305	27	1,336	26			
			Total	1,150	100	5,078	100			
h. Combined dissimilar concepts to create a novel idea	TRNcreate	1	Never	167	14	942	19			
		2	Sometimes	477	42	2,172	43			
		3	Often	345	30	1,337	26	2.4	2.3 ***	.13
		4	Very often	158	14	627	12		△	
			Total	1,147	100	5,078	100			
i. Adapted a previously used solution to a new situation	TRNadapt	1	Never	72	6	434	9			
		2	Sometimes	384	33	1,795	35			
		3	Often	471	41	1,884	37	2.7	2.7 **	.10
		4	Very often	223	20	963	19		△	
			Total	1,150	100	5,076	100			

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 (2-tailed); Refer to the endnotes page for the key to triangle symbols.

NSSE 2024 Development of Transferable Skills

Frequencies and Statistical Comparisons
University of Kentucky

Seniors

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values [c]	Response options	Frequency Distributions [a] UK Count	%	Dev Transfer Skills Count	%	Statistical Comparisons [b] UK Mean	Dev Transfer Skills Mean	Effect size [d]
j. Referred to online content (tutorial, forum, webpage, etc.) to solve a problem	TRNonlsolve	1	Never	28	3	187	4			
		2	Sometimes	227	20	1,116	22			
		3	Often	423	36	1,814	36	3.2	3.1 *	.08
		4	Very often	470	41	1,967	38		△	
			Total	1,148	100	5,084	100			
k. Referred to online content (tutorial, forum, webpage, etc.) to learn a new skill or procedure	TRNonlskill	1	Never	36	3	205	4			
		2	Sometimes	249	22	1,191	23			
		3	Often	432	37	1,844	37	3.1	3.0	.06
		4	Very often	429	37	1,833	35			
			Total	1,146	100	5,073	100			
l. Used project management tools to plan, organize, or schedule tasks	TRNproject	1	Never	99	9	506	10			
		2	Sometimes	330	29	1,566	32			
		3	Often	418	36	1,766	35	2.8	2.7 **	.09
		4	Very often	299	26	1,236	24		△	
			Total	1,146	100	5,074	100			
m. Used a daily or weekly "to do" list	TRNtodo	1	Never	81	7	389	8			
		2	Sometimes	209	19	1,063	22			
		3	Often	306	27	1,166	23	3.1	3.1	.05
		4	Very often	550	47	2,469	46			
			Total	1,146	100	5,087	100			
n. Prioritized what tasks need to be accomplished	TRNtasks	1	Never	12	1	80	2			
		2	Sometimes	154	14	577	12			
		3	Often	353	31	1,542	31	3.4	3.4	-.03
		4	Very often	628	54	2,884	56			
			Total	1,147	100	5,083	100			
o. Worked longer hours than usual to meet deadlines (i.e., after midnight, before dawn)	TRNhours	1	Never	49	4	320	6			
		2	Sometimes	320	28	1,316	27			
		3	Often	320	28	1,314	26	3.0	3.0	.02
		4	Very often	459	40	2,131	41			
			Total	1,148	100	5,081	100			
p. Written something (paper, report, article, etc.) that used information from a variety of sources (books, journals, Internet, databases, etc.)	TRNwrsource	1	Never	45	4	220	4			
		2	Sometimes	290	26	1,209	24			
		3	Often	383	34	1,671	33	3.0	3.1	-.05
		4	Very often	420	36	1,971	39			
			Total	1,138	100	5,071	100			
q. Written something (paper, report, article, etc.) that assessed the conclusions of a published work	TRNwrassess	1	Never	135	12	679	13			
		2	Sometimes	348	31	1,648	33			
		3	Often	340	29	1,412	28	2.7	2.7	.06
		4	Very often	321	27	1,328	26			
			Total	1,144	100	5,067	100			

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 (2-tailed); Refer to the endnotes page for the key to triangle symbols.

Seniors

Item wording or description	Variable name	Values [c]	Response options	Frequency Distributions [a] UK Count	%	Dev Transfer Skills Count	%	Statistical Comparisons [b] UK Mean	Dev Transfer Skills Mean	Effect size [d]
r. Written something (paper, report, article, etc.) that included ideas from more than one academic discipline	TRNwrideas	1	Never	110	10	640	12			
		2	Sometimes	403	36	1,737	34			
		3	Often	354	31	1,474	30	2.7	2.6	.03
		4	Very often	277	24	1,225	24			
			Total	1,144	100	5,076	100			
s. Written something (paper, report, article, etc.) that presented multiple viewpoints or perspectives	TRNwrviews	1	Never	115	10	587	12			
		2	Sometimes	416	37	1,877	37			
		3	Often	367	32	1,469	29	2.6	2.6	.02
		4	Very often	245	21	1,140	22			
			Total	1,143	100	5,073	100			

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 (2-tailed); Refer to the endnotes page for the key to triangle symbols.

First-Year Students

Variable name	N UK	Mean UK	Mean Dev Transfer Skills	Standard error[f] UK	Standard error[f] Dev Transfer Skills	Standard deviation[g] UK	Standard deviation[g] Dev Transfer Skills	DF[h]	Sig.[i]	Effect size[d]
								Comparisons with: Dev Transfer Skills		
TRNdebate	1,379	2.37	2.33	.024	.013	.91	.94	6,373	.171	.04
TRNspeech	1,378	2.49	2.09	.023	.013	.87	.93	6,371	.000	.43
TRNgroup	1,377	2.81	2.70	.022	.012	.80	.83	2,256	.000	.14
TRNethical	1,379	2.54	2.39	.024	.013	.88	.89	6,370	.000	.18
TRNcred	1,378	2.87	2.77	.022	.012	.81	.86	2,292	.000	.12
TRNcomplex	1,375	2.81	2.67	.022	.012	.80	.85	2,301	.000	.17
TRNsolution	1,377	2.85	2.73	.021	.012	.79	.82	2,265	.000	.14
TRNcreate	1,378	2.52	2.24	.024	.013	.88	.90	6,351	.000	.31
TRNadapt	1,373	2.72	2.54	.023	.012	.84	.85	2,217	.000	.21
TRNonlsolve	1,370	2.99	2.97	.022	.012	.82	.85	2,254	.527	.02
TRNonlskill	1,374	2.95	2.94	.022	.012	.82	.85	6,334	.714	.01
TRNproject	1,374	2.76	2.61	.023	.013	.85	.90	2,290	.000	.18
TRNtodo	1,376	2.97	2.96	.026	.015	.96	1.02	2,316	.876	.00
TRNtasks	1,364	3.21	3.27	.022	.011	.80	.79	6,313	.007	-.08
TRNhours	1,374	2.91	2.91	.024	.014	.91	.96	2,290	.982	.00
TRNwrsource	1,375	3.02	2.96	.022	.012	.83	.87	2,266	.023	.07
TRNwrassess	1,366	2.78	2.62	.025	.014	.91	.95	2,262	.000	.16
TRNwrideas	1,372	2.75	2.55	.025	.013	.91	.94	2,250	.000	.22
TRNwrviews	1,370	2.79	2.65	.023	.013	.86	.90	2,267	.000	.16

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 (2-tailed); Refer to the endnotes page for the key to triangle symbols.

Seniors

Variable name	N	Mean		Standard error[f]		Standard deviation[g]		DF[h]	Sig.[i]	Effect size[d]
	UK	UK	Dev Transfer Skills	UK	Dev Transfer Skills	UK	Dev Transfer Skills	Comparisons with: Dev Transfer Skills		
TRNdebate	1,152	2.31	2.36	.028	.015	.95	.98	1,828	.173	-.04
TRNspeech	1,157	2.28	2.25	.026	.014	.89	.96	1,897	.351	.03
TRNgroup	1,153	2.88	2.80	.024	.013	.83	.87	1,860	.003	.10
TRNethical	1,153	2.54	2.52	.026	.014	.89	.93	1,852	.549	.02
TRNcred	1,150	2.83	2.86	.026	.013	.87	.90	5,620	.278	-.04
TRNcomplex	1,153	2.90	2.85	.025	.013	.84	.89	1,876	.067	.06
TRNsolution	1,152	2.93	2.88	.024	.013	.81	.85	1,859	.059	.06
TRNcreate	1,149	2.44	2.32	.026	.014	.90	.91	5,616	.000	.13
TRNadapt	1,152	2.74	2.66	.025	.013	.84	.88	1,860	.003	.10
TRNonlsolve	1,150	3.16	3.09	.024	.013	.83	.86	5,621	.013	.08
TRNonlskill	1,148	3.09	3.04	.025	.013	.85	.87	5,610	.057	.06
TRNproject	1,148	2.80	2.71	.027	.014	.92	.94	5,610	.008	.09
TRNtodo	1,148	3.13	3.08	.029	.015	.97	1.00	1,832	.116	.05
TRNtasks	1,149	3.38	3.40	.022	.011	.76	.76	5,620	.331	-.03
TRNhours	1,150	3.03	3.01	.027	.014	.92	.97	1,852	.559	.02
TRNwrsource	1,140	3.02	3.06	.026	.013	.89	.89	5,602	.131	-.05
TRNwrassess	1,146	2.72	2.66	.029	.015	1.00	1.00	5,602	.087	.06
TRNwrideas	1,146	2.68	2.65	.028	.015	.94	.98	1,826	.378	.03
TRNwrviews	1,146	2.63	2.61	.027	.014	.93	.96	5,607	.565	.02

Endnotes

a. Column percentages are weighted by institution-reported sex and enrollment status (and institution size for comparison groups). Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding. Counts are unweighted; column percentages cannot be replicated from counts. Comparison group details are in the Selected Comparison Groups report, linked in the Data & Reports table on the Institution Interface.

b. All statistics are weighted by institution-reported sex and enrollment status (and institution size for comparison groups). Unless otherwise noted, statistical comparisons are two-tailed independent t-tests. Items with categorical response sets are left blank.

c. These are the values used to calculate means. For the majority of items, these values match the codes in the data file and codebook.

d. Effect size for independent t-tests uses Cohen's d; z-tests use Cohen's h.

e. Statistics are weighted by institution-reported sex and enrollment status (and institution size for comparison groups). Categorical items are not listed.

f. The 95% confidence interval for the population mean is equal to the sample mean plus or minus 1.96 times the standard error of the mean.

g. A measure of the amount individual scores deviate from the mean of all the scores in the distribution.

h. Degrees of freedom used to compute the t-tests. Values differ from Ns due to weighting and whether equal variances were assumed.

i. Statistical comparisons are two-tailed independent t-tests or z-tests. Statistical significance represents the probability that the difference between your students' mean and that of the students in the comparison group is due to chance.

j. Statistical comparison uses z-test to compare the proportion who responded (depending on the item) "Done or in progress" or "Yes" with all who responded otherwise.

k. Mean represents the proportion who responded (depending on the item) "Done or in progress" or "Yes."

Key to symbols:

▲   **Your students' average** was significantly higher (p < .05) with an effect size at least .3 in magnitude.

△   **Your students' average** was significantly higher (p < .05) with an effect size less than .3 in magnitude.

▽   **Your students' average** was significantly lower (p < .05) with an effect size less than .3 in magnitude.

▼   **Your students' average** was significantly lower (p < .05) with an effect size at least .3 in magnitude.

Note: It is important to interpret the direction of differences relative to item wording and your institutional context. You may not see all of these symbols in your report.