BASES OF COMPETENCE SKILLS PORTFOLIO SPECIFICATIONS

by

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Introduction

Transitions are difficult and exciting times in peoples' lives. The transition from middle school to high school, from high school to university or college or work, from one job or career to another, from living with your parents to being on your own or with a partner, are all important and memorable times in our lives. Many of my colleagues and I are nearing retirement; a transition that is also quite difficult for many people. It's important to realize that transitions are stressful and that it's not unusual to feel anxiety at these times. The Bases of Competence Skills Portfolio described in this document is geared to two transitions: from university or college to work and from one position or job or career to another. Of course, these two transitions are different, but the Portfolio described here can work equally well in both circumstances.

University and college students facing the transition to work should consider the fact that they have been students for most of their lives. In order to complete high school, be accepted by a university or college and graduate from that institution, they had to be good students. So, those of you who are near graduation from a university or college and those who have recently graduated should realize that they are changing their fundamental role as a student to that of an employee or entrepreneur. You are moving from a comfortable role to a new and, possibly, threatening role. I think that you would find that many university and college faculty never wanted to face the transition so they stayed in school to get graduate degrees and are still in school as teachers and professors! The point of this is to help you understand that it's okay to be anxious about the transition. One way to lower the anxiety is to prepare for the transition by creating your own Skills Portfolio.

Those of you who are in transition from on job to another or one career to another will also find a Skills Portfolio to be very useful. If you are like most people, you did not create a portfolio when you graduated from high school, college, or university. Creating one now will help you decide next steps in your personal transition. The process of creating a portfolio will help you organize your work and life experiences.

The process of preparing a skills portfolio has a very important spin-off. It helps you learn what you know. A lot of students who are near graduation, and many of us well after graduation, never "take stock" of what we know in terms of our knowledge and skills. Graduates of higher education programs learn a lot of information in school that is not integrated with knowledge gained through work and life experiences. When you are in a job interview you need to know what you know. The interviewer will likely ask about work situations where you drew on your knowledge and skills to solve a problem or accomplish a difficult task. The bulk of your skills portfolio consists of the descriptions of your abilities in each of the skill areas. You will include examples that show your competency in say "problem-solving." Thinking about and writing the sections will prepare you for what comes next in your work, as well as, job interviews.

Portfolios

The idea of a Skills Portfolio comes from the way that artists make up a portfolio of their best work to show a client, employer, or student. A Skills Portfolio summarizes your best work as well, with the focus on your abilities in terms of a list of skills. Faculty now routinely create portfolios (or dossiers) of their teaching and research in order to submit the material to performance review committees. Corporations are now having their employees document their work in portfolios. And some schools are now having students create portfolios of their work. On-line e-portfolios are also becoming popular.

Résumés and curricula vitae (CVs) serve as summaries of an individual's work experience, education, publications, skills, etc. Résumés are the more common of the two types. They are used in business and in most job interviewing situations. Everyone in the work force needs an up-to-date résumé. In universities and colleges curricula vitae are used. They contain information on an individual faculty member's teaching, research, and service. CVs are typically quite long – often up to 20 pages or more. Résumés should be kept to two pages. As you accumulate more experience, earlier jobs are dropped off to keep to the two page limit. Résumés and CVs can be produced from the information in a completed portfolio. Portfolios contain much more information and are not usually presented to job interviewers.

The intent of the Skills Portfolio is to serve as a framework for self-assessment, career planning, and preparation for job interviews. It will be a record of your skill development to date. I hope that you like the format and find the portfolio useful enough that you will want to continue to use it and update the contents periodically. The framework for the Skills Portfolio is the Bases of Competence Model (from Evers, Rush, James and Berdrow. *The Bases of Competence: Skills for Lifelong Learning and Employability.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998). The model consists of four base competencies: *Managing Self, Communicating, Managing People & Tasks,* and *Mobilizing Innovation & Change.* Each base competency is made up of four, or in the case of *Managing People & Tasks*, five, general skills (See Exhibits 1 and 2). The general skills can also be labelled "transferable" because they are relevant to any employment situation. Other skills are "non-transferable" because they are specific to a particular employer, e.g., how to use proprietary equipment.

This document will explain what the elements of a portfolio and how to create and benefit from its use. The framework for the portfolio is grounded in the four bases of competence and the reader's individual skills.

Exhibit 1. Making the Match Base Competencies

MANAGING SELF:

- Definition: Constantly developing practices and internalizing routines for maximizing one's ability to deal with the uncertainty of an ever-changing environment.

- Skill Set: Learning; Personal Organization and Time Management; Personal Strengths; and Problem-Solving / Analytic.

COMMUNICATING:

- Definition: Interacting effectively with a variety of individuals and groups   to facilitate the gathering, integrating, and conveying of information in many forms (e.g., verbal, written).

- Skill Set: Interpersonal, Listening, Oral Communication, Written Communication.

MANAGING PEOPLE AND TASKS:

- Definition: Accomplishing the tasks at hand by planning, organizing, coordinating, and controlling both resources and people.

- Skill Set: Coordinating; Decision-Making; Leadership / Influence; Managing Conflict; Planning and Organizing.

MOBILIZING INNOVATION AND CHANGE:

- Definition: Conceptualizing, as well as setting in motion, ways of initiating and managing change that involve significant departures from the current mode.

- Skill Set: Ability to Conceptualize; Creativity / Innovation / Change; Risk-Taking; and Visioning.

Exhibit 2. Definitions of Making the Match Skills within Base Competencies

MANAGING SELF: Constantly developing practices and internalizing routines for maximizing one's ability to deal with the uncertainty of an ever-changing environment.

●**Learning**: involves the ability to *gain knowledge from every-day experiences* and to *keep up-to-date* on developments in their field.

●**Personal Organization/Time Management**: involves *managing several tasks at once*, being able *to set priorities* and to *allocate time efficiently* in order to meet *deadlines*.

●**Personal Strengths**: comprises a variety of *personal traits* which assist individuals in dealing with day-to-day work situations. Some examples include: maintaining a *high energy level*; *motivating oneself* to function at optimal level of performance; functioning in stressful situations; maintaining a *positive attitude*; ability to *work independently*, and *responding appropriately to constructive criticism*.

●**Problem-Solving/Analytic**: consists of *identifying, prioritizing and solving problems*; individually or in groups. Involves the ability to *ask the right questions*, sort out the many facets of a problem, and *contribute ideas as well as answers* regarding the problem.

COMMUNICATING: Interacting effectively with a variety of individuals and groups to facilitate the gathering, integrating, and conveying of information in many forms (e.g., verbal, written).

●**Interpersonal**: involves *working well with others* (superiors, subordinates and peers), *understanding their needs* and being sympathetic with them.

●**Listening**: involves *being attentive* when others are speaking, and *responding effectively* to others' comments during a conversation.

●**Oral Communication**: involves the *ability to present information verbally to others*, either one-on-one or in groups.

●**Written Communication**: involves the *effective writing* of formal reports and business correspondence, as well as informal notes and memos.

Exhibit 2. Continued

MANAGING PEOPLE AND TASKS: Accomplishing the tasks at hand by planning, organizing, coordinating, and controlling both resources and people.

●**Coordinating**: involves being able to *coordinate the work of peers and subordinates* and *encourage positive group relationships*.

●**Decision-Making**: involves making timely decisions on the basis of a thorough *assessment of the short- and long-term effects* of decisions, *recognizing the political and ethical implications*, and being able to *identify those who will be affected by the decisions* made.

●**Leadership/Influence**: involves the ability to give *direction and guidance to others* and to *delegate work* tasks to peers and subordinates in a manner which proves to be effective, and *motivates others* to do their best.

●**Managing Conflict**: involves the ability to *identify sources of conflict* between oneself and others, or among other people, and to *take steps to overcome disharmony*.

●**Planning and Organizing**: involves being able to *determine the tasks to be carried out* toward meeting objectives (strategic and tactical), perhaps *assigning some of the tasks* to others, *monitoring the progress* made against the plan, and *revising a plan to include new information*.

MOBILIZING INNOVATION AND CHANGE: Conceptualizing as well as setting in motion ways of initiating and managing change that involve significant departures from the current mode.

●**Ability to Conceptualize**: involves the ability to combine relevant information from a number of sources, to *integrate information* into more general contexts, and to *apply information to new or broader contexts*.

●**Creativity/Innovation/Change**: involves the *ability to adapt* to situations of change, at times it involves the ability to *initiate change*, and *provide "novel" solutions* to problems. Also involves the ability to *reconceptualize roles* in response to changing demands related to the firm's success.

●**Risk-taking**: involves *taking reasonable job-related risks* by recognizing alternative or different ways of meeting objectives, while at the same time *recognizing the potential negative outcomes* and *monitoring the progress* toward the set objectives.

●**Visioning**: involves the ability to *conceptualize the future* of the company and to *provide innovative paths* for the company to follow.

This exhibit appeared in Evers & Rush (1996, pp. 280-281). Copyright Sage Publications, 1996.

Bases of Competence Skills Research

The *Making the Match Between University Graduates and Corporate Employers: Phase Two* project was a survey-based analysis of skill competencies of university students and graduates working in organizations in Canada. The project was led by Drs. Fred Evers and James Rush, professors at the University of Western Ontario at the outset of the research. Phase One, which was commissioned by the Corporate-Higher Education Forum, examined the adequacy of university education for corporate employment. The Phase Two study was conducted to investigate the skill development process from the early years of university to the ten-year point in individuals' careers within Canadian corporations.

In 1986, twenty of the Corporate Higher Education Forum's corporate members and five of its university members agreed to have their organizations participate in Phase Two. The participants, representing five career stages: 1. early university, 2. pre-graduate, 3. job entry, 4. job change, and 5. stabilized career, were surveyed first in 1987/88, and again in 1988/89 and 1989/90. A total of 1,610 respondents completed all three questionnaires.

A set of 18 skills form the heart of the questionnaires completed by students, graduates, and managers. The students and graduates were asked to assess themselves and managers (nominated by respondents) assessed university graduates working in their departments. The skill inventory was analyzed to determine if any logical groupings within the 18 skills exist. Four distinct combinations emerged which were found to be consistent with the evolving literature on skills and which, we believe, capture the current *bases of competence* necessary to work in today's workplace: (1) *Mobilizing Innovation and Change*: made up of ability to conceptualize, creativity/ innovation/ change, risk-taking, and visioning; (2) *Managing People and Tasks*: coordinating, decision-making, leadership/ influence, managing conflict, and planning/ organizing; (3) *Communicating*: interpersonal, listening, oral and written communication; and (4) *Managing Self*: learning, personal organization/ time management, personal strengths, and problem solving/ analytic (see attached list with definitions). Technical skills did not group with any of the four base competencies. Clearly important to today's workplace, computing and other technical skill areas should be dealt with as a distinct skill set. Dropping "technical" resulted in the 17 skill model that we now use.

The overall ratings by students, graduates, and managers are between `high' and `average' on a five point scale (`very high' to `very low') for all the skills, and hence, the base competencies. Within this range there are interesting differences. *Communicating* and *Managing Self* are consistently rated higher than *Mobilizing Innovation and Change* and *Managing People and Tasks*. New hires (job entry group) consistently give themselves lower *Mobilizing Innovation and Change* and *Managing People and Tasks* scores than the other groups and rate themselves higher on the other two bases.

We also asked our respondents which skills they felt would be in greatest demand in the future and which ones needed to be improved.   Visioning, creativity, and risk-taking from within the *Mobilizing Innovation and Change* base were felt to be in the highest demand in the future (and yet were rated the lowest in terms of competence). Also, leadership and managing conflict from the *Managing People and Tasks* base were viewed as critical skills for university graduates in corporate employment. When asked which of the 18 skills were most in need of improvement, <u>leadership</u> ranked first.

A major application of this research is to the development of competency-based education. Given the changing nature of organizations and the rapid evolution of knowledge, college and university graduates need a sound foundation of skills within the base competency areas. We also believe that education should be viewed as a lifelong process that continues into the workplace.

This research is summarized in a 1996 article entitled "The bases of competence: Skill development during the transition form university to work" by Evers and Rush in the journal *Management Learning* (Vol. 27, No. 3, pp. 275-299). Evers, Rush, and Berdrow published a book in 1998 based on the Making the Match project; ***The Bases of Competence: Skills for Lifelong Learning & Employability,*** Jossey-Bass, Inc., Publishers, San Francisco. The book contains project background and research findings, develops the base competencies, and discusses applications of competency-based education and training.

Dr. Berdrow has validated the bases of competence results with surveys of students in the Management program at Bentley College. Drs. Berdrow and Evers have presented the Bentley results and other applications of the bases of competence at a number of professional conferences.

Components of the Bases of Competence Skills Portfolio

- ***Personal Mission Statement*** – single sentence version (my preference) or a short paragraph or a set of goals or other format that works for You.

- ***Intellectual Autobiography*** – in three to five pages describe your intellectual development so far. This will serve as "*your story*" and as an introduction to the skills development sections of the portfolio.

- ***Résumé*** – in two different formats: "chronological" (experience) style and "combination" (skills and experience) style. The chronological version (most common) is based on work and volunteer experience while the combination focuses on skills. Some employers now require "key words" at the top of the résumé so that they can scan in resume and search on the key words.

- ***Example Cover Letters*** – look for job ads in newspapers and on the web that you can use for your cover letters. Make sure that you research the job and the organization before writing your cover letters.

- ***Record of Job Interviews*** – include key points that you want to remember from job interviews.

- ***Making the Match Base Competencies & Skill Sets Self-Assessment*** sheet. Rate yourself from 1 to 5 on each skill – you may wish to return to this sheet in 6 months or a year and see if you rate your competencies differently. There is a copy of the self-assessment at the end of this document.

- ***Evidence of Skills Development*** – this is the bulk of the portfolio. Organize using the four *Bases of Competence* developed in the "Making the Match" research project (*Managing Self, Communicating, Managing People & Tasks,* and *Mobilizing Innovation & Change).* Within each of the skills within each of the *Bases,* describe your competence.

- ***Specific Skills* –** in addition to the general skills, specific skills are presented in a separate section.

- ***Areas of Strengths and Areas Needing Development*** – this section summarizes the skills into strengths and ones needing development. It's an excellent guide to the future courses you intend to take.

- ***Resource Material*** – at the end of the portfolio keep track of web sites and useful material.

There are more details on each of these sections to follow…

Structure of the Bases of Competence Skills Portfolio

Use a 3 inch binder and 10 dividers to separate the sections. You may wish to use plastic covers on awards and other items so that it is not necessary to 3-hole punch the documents. For any documents that cannot be replaced you may wish to put photocopies in the portfolio. Consider using clip-art and other ways to personalize your portfolio.

Title Page.

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Section 1. Personal Mission Statement and Intellectual Autobiography

Creating Your Personal Mission Statement

Please note that personal mission statements are dynamic. As you change roles, jobs, and interests you would likely write different mission statements.

Purpose: The personal mission statement will be the first component of your Skills portfolio. It can serve as a guide for you as you look at job opportunities and career aspirations. Your mission statement should inspire you! You may wish to include it on your résumé to give employers a sense of your goals in work and life, but primarily it is for **you.** Several recent books (e.g., Covey et al, 1994 and Jones, 1996) have described mission statements as a self-assessment tool to help individuals with career planning and day-to-day decision-making.

Format/ Style: Mission statements come in various forms. They have been used by organizations for years. Businesses try to keep their mission statements brief and "catchy" so that they will be remembered by customers and can be used in advertising, e.g., GE's *We bring good things to life"* and Acura's: *Designed with purpose. Driven by passion*.

Others are quite long, detailing the different facets of the organization. There are alternative terms used for mission statements, such as "vision statements" and "purpose statements."

"The University of Guelph is renowned in Canada and around the world as a research-intensive and learner-centred institution and for its commitment to open learning, internationalism and collaboration.

"Our vision is to be Canada's leader in creating, transmitting and applying knowledge to improve the social, cultural and economic quality of life of people in Canada and around the world."   http://www.uoguelph.ca/

There are three styles: (1) single sentence, (2) paragraph or two, or (3) a list of objectives, e.g., I will…, I will…,…

Personal Mission Statement: Single Sentence Style

Laurie Beth Jones (1996, p. 3) advocates the single sentence style. "There are three simple elements to a good mission statement:

1.   A mission statement should be no more than a single sentence long.
2.   It should be easily understood by a twelve year old.
3.   It should be able to be recited by *memory* at gunpoint."

She continues: "The truth is that all great leaders in history have had missions that were no longer than one sentence long. Abraham Lincoln's mission was to preserve the

Union. FDR's was to end the Depression. Nelson Mandela's mission was to end apartheid. Mother Teresa's mission is [was] to show mercy and compassion to the dying. Joan of Arc's mission was to free France. Nehemiah's mission was to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem" (pp. 3-4). Jones' own mission statement is: "To recognize, promote and inspire the divine connection in myself and others" (p. 222). She outlines four steps to creating your own mission statement:

Step 1. **Every Mission Statement requires action**. Action words are verbs. Write down three action verbs that are meaningful to you (from Exhibit 3 or pp. 50-57 of *The Path*).

Step 2. **What do you stand for?** What principle, cause, value, or purpose would you be willing to devote your life to? What is your core? Write down the word or phase. Some examples: joy, service, justice, family, creativity, freedom, equality, faith, excellence (p. 58). See Exhibit 4 for a list of values.

Step 3. **Whom are you here to help?** Write down up to three. For example: elderly, environment, family, education, youth, children, poor, homeless, literacy, labour relations, performing arts (Pp. 59-63); other examples: volunteers, workers, people with cancer or other chronic diseases.

Step 4. **Put it together** (p. 63)...

My mission is to .....(Your three verbs), (Your core value), To, for or with....(the group(s) or cause).

Here are some examples developed using this technique:

- "To promote safety, well-being, and self-esteem for all children." - student in SOAN 432.
- "I will live each day with respect for myself and others, facing challenges as they come and learning from my mistakes in order to become a stronger person." - student in SOAN 432.
- "To inhale every sunrise, and look under every rock for the joy life has to offer." - woman who works in a cancer care centre (p. 67 of *The Path*).

NOTE: This technique does not work for everyone – try it and see if it is helpful. If not, then do some journaling and explore different ideas, or go for a walk in the woods or on a beach and let your mind wander! And/ or consider the following...

Personal Mission Statement: Paragraph Style

According to Covey, Merrill, and Merrill (1994, p. 113), "An empowering mission statement:

1. represents the deepest and best within you. It comes out of a solid connection with your deep inner life.

2. is the fulfilment of your own unique gifts. It's the expression of your unique capacity to contribute.

3. is transcendent. It's based on principles of contribution and purpose higher than self.

4. addresses and integrates all four fundamental human needs and capacities. It includes fulfilment in physical, social, mental, and spiritual dimensions. ["To live, to love, to learn, to leave a legacy"]

5. is based on principles that produce quality-of-life results...

6. deals with both vision and principle-based values...An empowering mission statement deals with both character and competence; **what you want to be and what you want to do in your life.**

7. deals with all the significant roles in your life. It represents a lifetime balance of personal, family, work, and community – whatever roles you feel are yours to fill.

8. **is written to inspire you – not to impress anyone else**. It communicates to you and inspires you on the most essential level." [bold added]

Mission statements given as examples by Covey et al (pp. 318-321) are usually one paragraph, here's the first example that they list:

"Climb the mountain: I will live each day with courage and a belief in myself and others. I will live by the values of integrity, freedom of choice, and a love of all God's people. I will strive to keep commitments not only to others but to myself as well. I will remember that to truly live, I must climb the mountain today for tomorrow may be too late. I know that my mountain may seem no more than a hill to others and I accept that. I will be renewed by my own personal victories and triumphs no matter how small. I will continue to make my own choices and to live with them as I have always done. I will not make excuses or blame others. I will, for as long as possible, keep my mind and body healthy and strong so that I am able to make the choice to climb the mountain. I will help others as best I can and I will thank those who help me along the way."

Exhibit 3. Action Verbs for Personal Mission Statement[1]

accomplish	adopt	advance	affect	affirm
alleviate	appreciate	believe	brighten	build
cause	choose	compel	complete	compose
confirm	connect	create	defend	delight
deliver	demonstrate	direct	discover	dream
educate	embrace	encourage	enlighten	excite
explore	facilitate	forgive	foster	generate
give	heal	implement	improve	inspire
involve	launch	mediate	model	motivate
nurture	open	organize	participate	perform
practice	praise	prepare	produce	promote
provide	pursue	realize	receive	reclaim
reflect	reform	remember	revise	sacrifice
safeguard	save	serve	share	speak
stand	support	surrender	sustain	take
travel	team	touch	travel	understand
use	utilize	validate	value	volunteer
work	worship	write	yield	

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[1] The "Action Verbs" list was abstracted by Ted Roberts from Jones' *The Path.*

Exhibit 4. Values for Personal Mission Statement[2]

authenticity	directness	honesty	partnership
trust	productivity	service	contribution
excellence	free spirit	focus	romance
recognition	harmony	accomplishment	organized
success	accuracy	lack of pretence	zest
tradition	recognition	performance	collaboration
community	personal power	connectedness	acknowledgment
comradeship	empowerment	joy	nurturing
full self-expression	beauty	risk taking	peace
elegance	vitality	integrity	contentment
adventure	responsibility	choice	creativity
learning	nature	spirituality	friendship
intimacy	innovate	fun	exercise
independence	sharing	growing	evolving
healthy	humour	balance	respect
honour	love	caring	nurturing
commitment	courage	fulfilment	enthusiasm
change	truth	power	

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[2] Ted Roberts developed this list for his exercise on developing a "Purpose Statement."

Creating Your Intellectual Autobiography

Purpose:

Your Intellectual Autobiography and Personal Mission Statement form the first section of your Skills Portfolio. Writing your Intellectual Autobiography is a way to reflect on your achievements, challenges, successes, failures, and important decisions.

Specifications:

- Length: two to three double-spaced pages (limit of five pages).

- Think of the Intellectual Autobiography as "***your story.***"

- Describe your intellectual development so far. Comment on specific academic and non-academic achievements that brought you to your situation. The focus is on the academic side, but if you are comfortable describing non-academic achievements and issues go ahead.

- Your instructor(s) will be reading your Skills Portfolio and you may wish to share your portfolio with others, so do not include any personal information that you would like to keep confidential.

- Think of the Intellectual Autobiography as a first step in documenting your competency on the various skills in the Bases of Competence skills model.

- Please remember that the Intellectual Autobiography and the entire Skills Portfolio is not graded on your level of proficiency of the skills, but rather on how well you present the material.

- It is my hope that the Intellectual Autobiography, Personal Mission Statement, and the Skills sections of the Portfolio help you - as a lifelong learner - take stock of where you are now. I also hope that you will continue to update your Portfolio. I've had many former students tell me that the Skills Portfolio was very useful to their personal transition to the workplace and that they continue to update their portfolios.

Section 2. Résumés, Mock Cover Letters, Record of Job Interviews.

Résumés

There is an abundance of information on résumés on the Internet and in books and other material. There is no reason not to have an excellent résumé. A poorly designed one will cause a negative impression on employers.

Once you have your résumé completed use the following checklist to see if your format is accurate. Note that there are two basic formats of résumés. The first is the traditional lay-out with positions listed chronologically from current. Skills are included under the positions. In the combination style, skills are grouped separately from positions and positions are listed without skills. Both are acceptable, the chronological style is probably used the most frequently.

Some job ads will request key words on the résumé. In this case key words from the résumé are inserted at the very top to enable scanning by the employer.

☐ One or two pages. Clear font. Easy to read.
☐ Name & address on p. 1, Name on p. 2.
☐ Education – usually first on both types.
☐ Awards and achievements.
☐ Résumé Style 1: "Chronological" – based on work and volunteer experience (start with most recent).
☐ Experience – volunteer and work – can be separate or together. Include years (on right margin), tasks, skills under each job.
☐ Résumé Style 2: "Combination" – based on skills and experience. Use job specific skills plus general categories that you choose. Be sure the skills are clear to you and to employer!
☐ You need to list all of your skills and then categorize to create this section.
☐ After skills include experience as a history – but without details .
☐ End with "References available upon request."
☐ Professional look – Check very carefully for spelling and other mistakes.
☐ One side of paper. Good quality paper (same as cover letter). Paperclip.

Cover Letters

Cover letters are crucial to a successful job search. They are the first thing that an employer sees when you apply for a job. Be sure to use a professional style with clear text describing in three paragraphs: (1) in the first paragraph indicate how you learned of the job and how excited you are about the opportunity to apply, (2) in the middle one (or two) paragraphs summarize why you are perfect for this job – your skills that relate to the job, and (3) in the closing paragraph reiterate why you would like this position and steps that you will take next (e.g., "I will call in two weeks…"). When complete use this checklist.

☐　One page. Nice paper (same as résumé) when you do the real thing.

☐　Same font as résumé.

☐　Your address (right margin or centred).

☐　Date.

☐　Contact's name, address of organization.

☐　Dear Ms. or Mr. Bond:
　　(*It's very important to have a contact name and to know whether the person is female or male.*)

☐　Indicate that you are applying for the position of president or whatever as advertised in the *Sun* or wherever on September 24, 2003 or whenever.

☐　Why this job interests you. Based on your research, indicate how company relates to your background. Yada, yada.

☐　Then in the next paragraph highlight your experience, skills, and education which relate to the job.

☐　Thanks for considering my application and indicate that you will be contacting her/him by phone within a certain length of time or ask him/her to call you. Be sure to include your phone number (and e-mail).

☐　Sincerely,
　　signature,
　　type your name.

Record of Job Interviews

Include a log of your job interviews in this section of the portfolio. Include notes about what went well and what did not go as well. Learn from your job interview experience. Don't make the same mistake twice!

Developing the portfolio is an excellent way to prepare for job interviewing. Job interviews are now almost exclusively "behavioral," i.e., give an example of when you made a mistake and had to correct it. By writing the skill sections you are thinking of many examples that you may later use in an interview setting.

We will discuss job interviewing as an on-line topic in the course. You may wish to engage in "mock" job interviews where you can learn a lot in a "safe" situation.

Section 3. **Making the Match Base Competencies & Skill Sets Self-Assessment sheet**

This is a self-assessment using the Base Competencies and Skills within each area. Rate yourself on a 5 point scale from "Very High" to "Very Low." Be honest! Think about tasks that you do within the skill areas as the basis of your self-assessment. Complete the form now and revisit it every six months or so to see if you feel that you have improved in the various skills.

A copy of the form is at the end of this document.

Section 4. *Managing Self*
Section 5. *Communicating*
Section 6. *Managing People & Tasks*
Section 7. *Mobilizing Innovation & Change*

These sections are the core of your portfolio. For each of the skills within the Base Competency (e.g., for *Managing Self* these are: *Learning, Personal Organization, Personal Strengths,* and *Problem Solving/ Analytic*) include a description of your development of that skill, evidence of the development of that skill and how you may wish to improve that skill. Include definitions of the base competency and definitions of each of the skills as introductions to each skill description. The definitions are in Exhibit 2 and the format of this section is covered in Exhibits 5 – 9.

The evidence can consist of: papers; presentations; discussion of work and volunteer experiences; discussion of courses (credit and non-credit); booklets, handouts, and other material you have prepared; your homepage; and any other relevant material. Include overviews to each of the *Bases (and skills within the area)* which explain how the evidence presented helped you develop the skills.

The order of the Base Competencies: *Managing Self, Communicating, Managing People and Tasks,* and *Mobilizing Innovation and Change*, represents the way they tend to be developed during university and workplace activities. We found that *Managing Self* and *Communicating* were developed more fully in university than *Managing People and Tasks* and *Mobilizing Innovation and Change,* so you may find that you have more evidence of skill development in the *Managing Self* and *Communicating* bases.

Pay particular attention to **Leadership** (a skill within *Managing People & Tasks).* Evers, Rush & Berdrow (1998) found that leadership was rated the lowest in competence and the greatest in demand in the future.

On the next few pages the format of the base competency sections is laid out in Exhibits 5 – 9. An actual example from a portfolio is used to show how Rebecca Morrison – a student in the transition course -- completed the discussion of "learning."

Exhibit 5. Example of Evidence Section – Page 1

Section 4. *Managing Self*

Definition:

Constantly developing practices and internalizing routines for maximizing one's ability to deal with the uncertainty of an ever-changing environment.

Skills:

Learning
Personal Organization/ Time Management
Personal Strengths
Problem Solving/ Analytic

Exhibit 6. Example of Evidence Section – Page 2

Section 4. *Managing Self* (con't)

Learning

Definition:

involves the ability to *gain knowledge from every-day experiences* and to *keep up-to-date* on developments in their field.

Exhibit 7. Discussion of Skill Competency – Pages 3-4

Section 4. Learning (con't)

Throughout my four years at the University of Guelph, I have learned one very important thing: learning does not end once you graduate high school or university, it is a continuous facet of life that should never be ignored but embraced.

I am sure that I learn something new every day. It may not be life altering; it may be something so minute that I missed the fact that I learned it. For example, each day in my anatomy class I learn how the human body works. Monday, I didn't know that each vein doesn't have corresponding arteries, but on Wednesday, I did. Just last week, I learned how easy it is to make tomato sauce. These little events led me to believe that learning never ends and I can use this new knowledge to better my life.

The knowledge I gained in high school helped me to succeed in University, and the knowledge I gain in University will help me to succeed in the job field. I know that over the past four years, I have developed my skills and learned quite a lot. For instance, when I study for a test, it is not just to memorize the material like I did in high school, but also to understand the material presented to me. This method not only helps me get great marks on tests, but I now can utilize this knowledge in my every day life. My father was a big coffee drinker. He drank 6 cups of coffee a day. After my first year of university, I learned how to research a topic and present in a simple, effective manner. I researched the disadvantages and side effects of drinking coffee and gave this information to him, in the hopes that he would cut back, which he did.

I have also learned that there are many different ways to learn new information. For instance, some people are better learners when they are being lectured to: others learn better independently, I learn the best when it is hands-on. For instance, in my organic chemistry class, I understood the concepts a lot better in the laboratory than in class. This aspect of learning also applies to my life as a peer helper. When I first became a peer, there were many procedures, and formats that I needed to learn. I found it very difficult to read a hand out, as my supervisor was lecturing me too. I decided that in order to understand these procedures, I need to physically go through them. This hands-on approach allowed

me to understand this new information the best and help me to be the most effective at my job.

The development of my ability to learn is also apparent in my social life. In many aspects of my life, I have to be professional, something I never thought I needed to be. In high school, I acted however I wanted, whenever I wanted, even if it left a poor impression of me. I can remember this one incident when I was being particularly rude to my mother at the bank. I left such a poor impression that the bank teller did not take me seriously when I wanted to invest my money, and would only serve me when a parental figure was there. Now actions like that would be very unacceptable, and may cost me valuable experience. Over the years, I have learned how to act appropriately in a variety of situations ranging from interviews, cultural outings and jobs.

Learning is not just a part of school work, it is a part of life, whether it be with my friends, at a job, or a volunteer position, I am always learning something.

--by Rebecca Morrison, ISS*4320: Transition from School to Work, Fall 2002, University of Guelph.

Exhibit 8. Example of Evidence Section – Page 5

Section 4. Learning (con't)

Possible "evidence" of learning comes next. For example, Rebecca might want to include examples of how study sheets she used in anatomy or another course. Or she could include a lab report or essay where she received an excellent grade.

There's a very wide range of "evidence" that can be used in your portfolio to show your abilities in various areas. You might also want to show areas where you need more development and evidence that shows you have improved (or are improving) in the area. This is <u>your</u> portfolio use the most useful evidence possible.

Exhibit 9. Example of Evidence Section – Page 5

Then move to the next skill…

Section 4. *Managing Self* (con't)

Personal Organization/ Time Management

Definition:

involves *managing several tasks at once*, being able *to set priorities* and to *allocate time efficiently* in order to meet *deadlines*.

And so on….

Section 8. Specific Skills

Include information on any specific skills that you feel are relevant to your career in this section. For example, fluency in foreign languages, computer programs, statistical packages (e.g., SPSS), web page development, first aid, CPR, event coordinator, etc. Using skills in this section does not mean you cannot refer to them in the other skill sections. The skills are not mutually exclusive.

Section 9. Areas of Strengths and Areas Needing Development

As a way to conclude your Portfolio, list the skills that you feel are your best assets and then the skills that you would like to develop further. Create a summary from your discussions of each skill to have a clear idea of where you should focus your development. Most employers provide short courses and workshops for employees both in-house and through external sources. Take advantage of these opportunities and where possible, select training in areas where you know you need development. You may also have opportunities to take continuing education courses and workshops at neighbouring colleges and universities, as well as on-line offerings.

Section 10. Resource Material

Use the last section of your portfolio for information on a variety of topics: job search web sites, web sites applicable to your work, books related to career development or other topics, articles, newspaper clippings, etc. Basically, any material relevant to your career transition. Be sure to check that the material is accurate and well designed.

Updating Your Skills Portfolio

Creating a Skills Portfolio is a lot of work. But, it is well worth the effort. One of the nice features of the structure is that it is easy to keep it up-to-date. Whenever you take a course be sure to update the relevant skill sections. Be sure to update periodically because work experience will enhance your skill sections. Check the self-assessment sheet for an overview of where you have further developed skills. Plan on updating the portfolio every 6 months or once a year. If you are job searching, update your portfolio before you begin the process.

Good luck with your career transitions and let me know how the portfolio has helped you with the process. Thanks!

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