

TEACHING TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

Instructor Toolkit

Executive Summary

The Teaching Transferable Skills Toolkit helps instructors intentionally integrate the University of Kentucky's 10 Essential Skills into courses and assignments. The goal is not to redesign a course from scratch, but to identify where students are already developing transferable skills and make that learning more visible, scaffolded, and assessable.



Key Takeaway

Start with the learning already happening, make the skill explicit, give students opportunities to practice and improve, and help them recognize how that learning can transfer beyond the course.

Start with What You Already Teach

Students often practice skills such as communication, critical thinking, teamwork, information literacy, and knowledge application through existing assignments, discussions, projects, and disciplinary practices. Because these skills are transferable, they will look different across courses and fields. Instructors can begin by identifying where skill development is already happening and making those connections more explicit to students.

Make Skills Visible

Broad skills become easier to teach and assess when they are translated into specific, observable student actions, what students will actually do in an assignment. Students should understand what skill they are practicing, what successful performance looks like, and how they will receive feedback.

Build Skills Over Time

Essential Skills develop through repeated opportunities for:

Practice → Feedback → Development → Demonstration

Students benefit from trying a skill in lower-stakes contexts, refining it through feedback and increasingly complex application, and ultimately demonstrating it with greater independence.

What's Included

[Making Essential Skills Visible | Design Tool](#)

Identify what students will do, clarify expectations for success, and create student-facing language for an assignment.

[Scaffolding Essential Skills Across a Course | Planning Tool](#)

Map how students will practice, develop, receive feedback on, and demonstrate a skill over time.

[Transparent Assignment Design | Template](#)

Align an assignment's purpose, Essential Skills, disciplinary knowledge, tasks, criteria for success, feedback, reflection, and transfer.