
NSSE 2025 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 Selected Comparison Groups report, available in PDF format in your report download folder.

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NSSE 2025 Development of Transferable Skills

Frequencies and Statistical Comparisons

University of Kentucky

First-Year Students

				Frequency Distributions ^a				Statistical Comparisons ^b		
				UK		Dev Transfer Skills		UK	Dev Transfer Skills	Effect size ^d
Item wording or description	Variable name	Values ^c	Response options	Count	%	Count	%	Mean	Mean	
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	292	17	570	19	2.3	2.3	.00
		2	Sometimes	770	45	1,141	41			
		3	Often	468	27	729	27			
		4	Very often	207	12	362	13			
		Total		1,737	100	2,802	100			
b. Made a speech to a group	TRNspeech	1	Never	251	14	783	28	2.4	2.1 ***	.30
		2	Sometimes	782	45	1,147	41			
		3	Often	504	29	602	21			
		4	Very often	202	12	271	9			
		Total		1,739	100	2,803	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	58	3	170	6	2.8	2.7 **	.07
		2	Sometimes	588	34	973	35			
		3	Often	775	44	1,121	41			
		4	Very often	316	18	534	18			
		Total		1,737	100	2,798	100			
d. Discussed the ethical consequences of a course of action	TRNethical	1	Never	181	10	465	16	2.5	2.4 ***	.16
		2	Sometimes	718	41	1,170	42			
		3	Often	620	36	844	31			
		4	Very often	217	12	320	11			
		Total		1,736	100	2,799	100			
e. Evaluated the credibility of information sources	TRNcred	1	Never	63	4	185	6	2.9	2.7 ***	.13
		2	Sometimes	528	31	944	34			
		3	Often	740	42	1,087	40			
		4	Very often	405	23	582	20			
		Total		1,736	100	2,798	100			
f. Discussed complex problems with others to develop a better solution	TRNcomplex	1	Never	68	4	234	8	2.7	2.7 ***	.12
		2	Sometimes	594	34	1,013	36			
		3	Often	777	45	1,038	38			
		4	Very often	297	17	507	18			
		Total		1,736	100	2,792	100			
g. Generated multiple solutions to a problem or task	TRNsolution	1	Never	63	4	165	6	2.8	2.7 ***	.09
		2	Sometimes	573	33	986	35			
		3	Often	763	44	1,129	41			
		4	Very often	333	19	516	18			
		Total		1,732	100	2,796	100			
h. Combined dissimilar concepts to create a novel idea	TRNcreate	1	Never	226	13	619	22	2.4	2.2 ***	.24
		2	Sometimes	744	43	1,202	43			
		3	Often	554	32	695	25			
		4	Very often	207	12	274	9			
		Total		1,731	100	2,790	100			
i. Adapted a previously used solution to a new situation	TRNadapt	1	Never	108	6	277	10	2.6	2.6 ***	.09
		2	Sometimes	671	39	1,101	39			
		3	Often	708	41	1,009	37			
		4	Very often	243	14	402	14			
		Total		1,730	100	2,789	100			

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First-Year Students

				Frequency Distributions ^a				Statistical Comparisons ^b		
				UK		Dev Transfer Skills		UK	Dev Transfer Skills	Effect size ^d
Item wording or description	Variable name	Values ^c	Response options	Count	%	Count	%	Mean	Mean	
j. Referred to online content (tutorial, forum, webpage, etc.) to solve a problem	TRNnonsolve	1	Never	42	2	111	4	2.9	3.0 **	-.09 ▽
		2	Sometimes	491	29	668	24			
		3	Often	719	41	1,091	40			
		4	Very often	478	28	921	33			
		Total		1,730	100	2,791	100			
k. Referred to online content (tutorial, forum, webpage, etc.) to learn a new skill or procedure	TRNnonskill	1	Never	49	3	112	4	2.9	3.0	-.05
		2	Sometimes	502	29	755	27			
		3	Often	726	42	1,051	38			
		4	Very often	455	26	869	31			
		Total		1,732	100	2,787	100			
l. Used project management tools to plan, organize, or schedule tasks	TRNproject	1	Never	91	5	310	12	2.8	2.6 ***	.18 △
		2	Sometimes	591	34	992	36			
		3	Often	701	40	943	34			
		4	Very often	349	20	541	19			
		Total		1,732	100	2,786	100			
m. Used a daily or weekly "to do" list	TRNtodo	1	Never	99	6	266	11	3.0	2.9	.02
		2	Sometimes	462	27	688	25			
		3	Often	538	31	647	23			
		4	Very often	632	36	1,186	41			
		Total		1,731	100	2,787	100			
n. Prioritized what tasks need to be accomplished	TRNtasks	1	Never	21	1	52	2	3.2	3.3 ***	-.14 ▽
		2	Sometimes	341	20	437	16			
		3	Often	665	38	936	34			
		4	Very often	705	40	1,353	48			
		Total		1,732	100	2,778	100			
o. Worked longer hours than usual to meet deadlines (i.e., after midnight, before dawn)	TRNhours	1	Never	88	5	220	8	2.9	2.9	.00
		2	Sometimes	525	31	750	27			
		3	Often	586	34	853	31			
		4	Very often	535	30	968	33			
		Total		1,734	100	2,791	100			
p. Written something (paper, report, article, etc.) that used information from a variety of sources (books, journals, Internet, databases, etc.)	TRNwrsources	1	Never	36	2	113	4	3.0	2.9	.05
		2	Sometimes	480	28	790	29			
		3	Often	672	39	1,002	36			
		4	Very often	547	31	883	31			
		Total		1,735	100	2,788	100			
q. Written something (paper, report, article, etc.) that assessed the conclusions of a published work	TRNwrassess	1	Never	124	7	333	12	2.7	2.6 ***	.15 △
		2	Sometimes	581	34	982	37			
		3	Often	616	36	866	32			
		4	Very often	405	23	598	20			
		Total		1,726	100	2,779	100			

NSSE 2025 Development of Transferable Skills

Frequencies and Statistical Comparisons

University of Kentucky

First-Year Students

				Frequency Distributions ^a				Statistical Comparisons ^b		
				UK		Dev Transfer Skills		UK	Dev Transfer Skills	
Item wording or description	Variable name	Values ^c	Response options	Count	%	Count	%	Mean	Mean	Effect size ^d
r. Written something (paper, report, article, etc.) that included ideas from more than one academic discipline	TRNwrideas	1	Never	124	7	373	13	2.7	2.5 *** △	.18
		2	Sometimes	622	36	1,020	38			
		3	Often	613	35	864	31			
		4	Very often	371	21	527	18			
		Total		1,730	100	2,784	100			
s. Written something (paper, report, article, etc.) that presented multiple viewpoints or perspectives	TRNwrviews	1	Never	86	5	248	9	2.7	2.6 *** △	.11
		2	Sometimes	629	37	1,030	37			
		3	Often	654	38	938	34			
		4	Very often	364	21	567	20			
		Total		1,733	100	2,783	100			

Seniors

				Frequency Distributions ^a				Statistical Comparisons ^b		
				UK		Dev Transfer Skills		UK	Dev Transfer Skills	Effect size ^d
Item wording or description	Variable name	Values ^c	Response options	Count	%	Count	%	Mean	Mean	
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	212	16	745	20	2.5	2.4 **	.09
		2	Sometimes	510	38	1,378	39			
		3	Often	374	28	803	24			
		4	Very often	237	18	553	17			
		Total		1,333	100	3,479	100			
b. Made a speech to a group	TRNspeech	1	Never	263	20	785	22	2.3	2.2	.04
		2	Sometimes	578	44	1,520	44			
		3	Often	335	25	735	21			
		4	Very often	158	12	436	13			
		Total		1,334	100	3,476	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	62	5	170	4	2.9	2.8 *	.07
		2	Sometimes	367	28	1,089	33			
		3	Often	565	43	1,329	38			
		4	Very often	339	25	887	24			
		Total		1,333	100	3,475	100			
d. Discussed the ethical consequences of a course of action	TRNethical	1	Never	138	10	429	12	2.6	2.6 *	.08
		2	Sometimes	465	36	1,313	38			
		3	Often	452	34	1,110	32			
		4	Very often	275	20	625	18			
		Total		1,330	100	3,477	100			
e. Evaluated the credibility of information sources	TRNcred	1	Never	63	5	196	5	2.9	2.9	.03
		2	Sometimes	337	26	972	28			
		3	Often	549	41	1,316	38			
		4	Very often	380	28	992	29			
		Total		1,329	100	3,476	100			
f. Discussed complex problems with others to develop a better solution	TRNcomplex	1	Never	59	4	207	5	2.9	2.9	.05
		2	Sometimes	345	26	969	28			
		3	Often	557	42	1,356	39			
		4	Very often	368	27	945	27			
		Total		1,329	100	3,477	100			
g. Generated multiple solutions to a problem or task	TRNsolution	1	Never	41	3	161	4	3.0	2.9	.06
		2	Sometimes	351	26	970	28			
		3	Often	558	42	1,395	40			
		4	Very often	380	29	943	27			
		Total		1,330	100	3,469	100			
h. Combined dissimilar concepts to create a novel idea	TRNcreate	1	Never	178	13	642	18	2.5	2.3 ***	.18
		2	Sometimes	537	41	1,521	45			
		3	Often	412	31	886	25			
		4	Very often	197	15	419	12			
		Total		1,324	100	3,468	100			
i. Adapted a previously used solution to a new situation	TRNadapt	1	Never	75	5	270	7	2.8	2.7 **	.10
		2	Sometimes	437	33	1,271	37			
		3	Often	539	41	1,259	37			
		4	Very often	273	21	664	19			
		Total		1,324	100	3,464	100			

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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	Effect size ^d
				Count	%	Count	%	Mean	Mean	
j. Referred to online content (tutorial, forum, webpage, etc.) to solve a problem	TRNnonsolve	1	Never	32	2	114	3	3.2	3.1	.02
		2	Sometimes	247	19	724	20			
		3	Often	506	38	1,223	36			
		4	Very often	539	40	1,413	41			
		Total		1,324	100	3,474	100			
k. Referred to online content (tutorial, forum, webpage, etc.) to learn a new skill or procedure	TRNnonskill	1	Never	36	3	127	3	3.1	3.1	.01
		2	Sometimes	281	21	771	22			
		3	Often	515	39	1,241	37			
		4	Very often	494	37	1,328	38			
		Total		1,326	100	3,467	100			
l. Used project management tools to plan, organize, or schedule tasks	TRNproject	1	Never	89	7	349	10	2.8	2.7 **	.09
		2	Sometimes	399	31	1,074	32			
		3	Often	496	37	1,174	33			
		4	Very often	340	25	875	25			
		Total		1,324	100	3,472	100			
m. Used a daily or weekly "to do" list	TRNtodo	1	Never	87	7	296	9	3.1	3.1	.00
		2	Sometimes	303	24	742	22			
		3	Often	330	25	790	22			
		4	Very often	603	44	1,648	47			
		Total		1,323	100	3,476	100			
n. Prioritized what tasks need to be accomplished	TRNtasks	1	Never	13	1	58	2	3.4	3.4	-.05
		2	Sometimes	175	14	389	12			
		3	Often	414	32	1,065	30			
		4	Very often	720	53	1,955	56			
		Total		1,322	100	3,467	100			
o. Worked longer hours than usual to meet deadlines (i.e., after midnight, before dawn)	TRNhours	1	Never	60	4	228	7	3.0	3.0 **	.10
		2	Sometimes	344	26	933	29			
		3	Often	384	29	919	26			
		4	Very often	536	40	1,389	38			
		Total		1,324	100	3,469	100			
p. Written something (paper, report, article, etc.) that used information from a variety of sources (books, journals, Internet, databases, etc.)	TRNwrsources	1	Never	51	4	154	4	3.0	3.1	-.04
		2	Sometimes	326	25	823	23			
		3	Often	434	33	1,135	33			
		4	Very often	513	38	1,350	40			
		Total		1,324	100	3,462	100			
q. Written something (paper, report, article, etc.) that assessed the conclusions of a published work	TRNwrassess	1	Never	153	12	458	13	2.7	2.7	.05
		2	Sometimes	408	32	1,113	33			
		3	Often	378	29	989	28			
		4	Very often	379	28	907	26			
		Total		1,318	100	3,467	100			

NSSE 2025 Development of Transferable Skills

Frequencies and Statistical Comparisons

University of Kentucky

Seniors

				Frequency Distributions ^a				Statistical Comparisons ^b		
				UK		Dev Transfer Skills		UK	Dev Transfer Skills	Effect size ^d
Item wording or description	Variable name	Values ^c	Response options	Count	%	Count	%	Mean	Mean	
r. Written something (paper, report, article, etc.) that included ideas from more than one academic discipline	TRNwrideas	1	Never	130	10	435	12	2.7	2.6 **	.09
		2	Sometimes	434	33	1,236	35			
		3	Often	403	30	997	29			
		4	Very often	356	26	800	23			
		Total		1,323	100	3,468	100			
s. Written something (paper, report, article, etc.) that presented multiple viewpoints or perspectives	TRNwrviews	1	Never	118	9	429	12	2.7	2.6 **	.10
		2	Sometimes	478	36	1,299	37			
		3	Often	407	31	968	28			
		4	Very often	326	24	768	22			
		Total		1,329	100	3,464	100			

First-Year Students

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	1,738	2.34	2.34	.021	.014	.89	.93	3,363	.965	.00
TRNspeech	1,740	2.38	2.11	.021	.014	.87	.92	3,405	.000	.30
TRNgroup	1,737	2.77	2.72	.019	.013	.78	.83	3,424	.010	.07
TRNethical	1,737	2.50	2.37	.020	.014	.84	.88	3,371	.000	.16
TRNcred	1,737	2.85	2.74	.020	.013	.81	.85	3,350	.000	.13
TRNcomplex	1,737	2.75	2.65	.019	.013	.78	.87	3,564	.000	.12
TRNsolution	1,732	2.79	2.71	.019	.013	.79	.82	3,337	.001	.09
TRNcreate	1,732	2.43	2.22	.021	.014	.86	.89	3,329	.000	.24
TRNadapt	1,730	2.63	2.55	.019	.013	.80	.85	3,416	.001	.09
TRNnonsolve	1,731	2.94	3.01	.019	.013	.81	.85	3,356	.002	-.09
TRNnonskill	1,733	2.91	2.96	.020	.013	.81	.86	3,380	.068	-.05
TRNproject	1,733	2.75	2.59	.020	.014	.83	.92	3,539	.000	.18
TRNtodo	1,732	2.96	2.94	.022	.016	.93	1.05	3,596	.385	.02
TRNtasks	1,733	3.18	3.28	.019	.012	.79	.79	3,241	.000	-.14
TRNhours	1,734	2.90	2.90	.021	.015	.89	.96	3,441	.957	.00
TRNwrsources	1,736	2.99	2.94	.020	.013	.82	.87	3,381	.051	.05
TRNwrassess	1,726	2.75	2.61	.021	.014	.89	.94	3,352	.000	.15
TRNwrideas	1,731	2.70	2.54	.021	.014	.88	.93	3,399	.000	.18
TRNwrviews	1,734	2.74	2.64	.020	.014	.84	.90	3,422	.000	.11

NSSE 2025 Development of Transferable Skills

Detailed Statistics^e University of Kentucky

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	1,335	2.47	2.38	.026	.016	.96	.99	2,420	.003	.09
TRNspeech	1,336	2.29	2.25	.025	.015	.91	.94	2,427	.178	.04
TRNgroup	1,334	2.88	2.83	.023	.014	.83	.85	2,386	.036	.07
TRNethical	1,331	2.64	2.57	.025	.015	.92	.92	2,356	.010	.08
TRNcred	1,330	2.92	2.90	.023	.014	.85	.88	2,400	.403	.03
TRNcomplex	1,330	2.93	2.89	.023	.014	.84	.87	2,423	.120	.05
TRNsolution	1,331	2.96	2.91	.022	.014	.82	.84	2,418	.051	.06
TRNcreate	1,325	2.48	2.32	.025	.015	.90	.90	2,333	.000	.18
TRNadapt	1,326	2.77	2.68	.023	.014	.84	.86	2,399	.001	.10
TRNnonsolve	1,326	3.17	3.15	.022	.014	.81	.84	2,394	.560	.02
TRNnonskill	1,328	3.10	3.09	.023	.014	.82	.85	2,406	.697	.01
TRNproject	1,325	2.81	2.72	.024	.016	.89	.95	2,461	.003	.09
TRNtodo	1,325	3.06	3.06	.027	.017	.98	1.02	2,422	.896	.00
TRNtasks	1,323	3.38	3.42	.021	.012	.76	.75	2,322	.100	-.05
TRNhours	1,325	3.05	2.96	.025	.016	.92	.97	2,470	.002	.10
TRNwrsources	1,325	3.04	3.08	.024	.015	.89	.89	2,334	.208	-.04
TRNwrassess	1,319	2.73	2.67	.027	.016	1.00	1.00	2,325	.099	.05
TRNwrideas	1,324	2.73	2.64	.026	.016	.96	.97	2,343	.003	.09
TRNwrviews	1,330	2.69	2.60	.026	.016	.94	.96	2,412	.002	.10

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.