

Skilling for the Future

TAFE Teacher Guide to Generic Skills



**The 2003-2004
Transferable Skills Project
School Representatives**

**With support from TAFE frontiers
2004 Knowledge Management
Research Circles Project**

CRICOS Provider Number 00103D

Skilling for the Future:

What does it mean for YOU (the UB TAFE Teacher)?

What are generic skills?

The workplace of the 21st century has a high demand for generic skills: a range of skills beyond the technical skills needed for doing a job. Since 1992, these skills have been called the Mayer Key Competencies and they appear (sometimes hidden) in Training Packages and curriculum documents. The Mayer Key Competencies are listed in Appendix 1.

Many names have been given to these skills: generic, employability skills, soft skills, life skills, essential skills, to name a few. Whatever name we give them, these skills are generally defined as 'those skills that apply across a variety of jobs and are not specific to a particular industry or vocation' (2004, NCVER, p.1).

Even seemingly simple tasks like choosing a bank or making a banking transaction now require a whole range of skills including using a computer to navigate the Internet, collecting and analysing information, communicating and negotiating, planning and organising.

To help UB learners meet the demands of the workplace, generic skills need to be embedded into course delivery. As an organisation, we do our learners a disservice if these skills are not a focus of our learning programs. A scoping study conducted for the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) by Clayton and Blom (2004)¹ into the teaching and learning practice of Vocational Education and Training (VET) practitioners indicated almost 50 % of the respondents reported that they were not effective and confident in incorporating key competencies into their programs. More than 50 % of respondents also reported that they were not confident in their development of Language, Literacy and Numeracy (LLN) as part of their learning programs. Generic skills begin with these key competencies and are underpinned by Language Literacy and Numeracy. It is essential that teachers are confidently addressing these areas.



I teach from a Training Package — do I need to know about Generic Skills?

Yes you do!

The Terms of Reference for the recent High Level Review of Training Packages stated that "The changing nature of work is leading to the re-conceptualising of skills required by companies to compete in the global economy. There is debate around the combination of technical knowledge and skills, generic and employability skills and personal capacities and attitudes... In addition to responding to the changing world of work and skill requirements, the VET sector has a role in proactively influencing the direction of change and in shaping the economic and social outcomes at individual, community, national and international levels."²

I teach from a curriculum document — do I need to know about Generic Skills?

Yes, you do too!

Many Further Education programs are taught from curriculum documents. In fact, many generic skills form the basis for Further Education programs, especially those that underpin Language, Literacy and Numeracy.

What about different workplace Performance Levels?

Performance levels for the Mayer KeyCompetencies have been clearly defined and each Training Package identifies (sometimes at the unit level) the performance level of the key competency required in the workplace for the specific task/s. You need to have a clear understanding of the performance levels required for the key competencies integrated into the units you teach. If you are unsure what Performance Level is appropriate for a particular generic skill you should arrange to speak to a TAFE Curriculum Officer.



- 1 Clayton, B. and Blom, K. (2004). *Doing it well, doing it better; Practitioners, pedagogy and training packages*. ANTA.
- 2 Australian National Training Authority (2003). *Terms of Reference: High Level Review of Training Packages*.

What is the current generic skills debate?

Recently there has been growing interest for employees to demonstrate a broader range of skills than those reflected in the Mayer competencies. There is little general agreement either globally or within Australia as to precisely which skills or attitudes should be 'added' to the Mayer Key Competencies to provide a complete set of generic skills relevant for the 21st century.

Several skill frameworks have been developed, including the Employability Skills Framework from the Australian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, and the Victorian Learning and Employment Skills Council (VLESC) list of generic skills. These frameworks are included in Appendices 1 and 2.

What does the generic skills debate have to do with me?

This is the fundamental question directing the work of the UB TAFE Division Transferable Skills project.

This major ongoing staff development project was funded in the UB TAFE Division from October 2003 to December 2004 with the specific aims to:

1. Examine various frameworks of proposed employability skills to determine their usefulness to UB (TAFE Division)
2. Articulate to all TAFE teaching staff the importance of embedding employability (generic) skills into course delivery
3. Identify both internal and external exemplars where employability (generic) skills are embedded and assessed effectively
4. Provide professional development through a work-based (action learning) mentoring model to TAFE teaching staff which would enable them to:
 - a. Identify where employability skills are situated within their Training Packages/course curricula, and
 - b. Embed these skills into their learning programs
 - c. Assess these skills appropriately
5. Investigate ways in which the effectiveness of the PD program might be monitored.



The project group commenced its work by examining existing generic skills frameworks and attempting to identify a set of skills that could be realistically taught and assessed in UB TAFE programs. The project group discussed what to call these skills and eventually decided upon the name Transferable Skills, which they felt reflected the transferability of these skills across industry areas and into many life situations. Each participant in this staff development project drafted an Action Plan to disseminate information from the wider project group and to raise awareness of the need to develop these skills in UB (TAFE) learners.

Which skills are included in the UB (TAFE Division) Transferable Skills set?

After much discussion and debate, participants in the group generally agreed to the following set of skills. The starting point for this list was the Mayer Key Competencies. This list, however, includes additional skills in the areas of self-management and learning, global and sustainable perspective, as well as embedding recognition of the need for cultural understanding when communicating and working as a team member. Why were these additions made? The workplace of the 21st century is not static. Workers need to update their technical skills regularly and consequently need a willingness and motivation to continue their learning. If we want to leave the world with sufficient resources for future generations, working and living sustainably will be essential.

Although the list is in a draft form, the project team believes the skills are those we all need for living into the future.

1. Collecting, analysing, organising and using information

- > Locate, sift and sort information
- > Evaluate information, sources and methods used to obtain (both formal and informal sources)
- > Use information appropriately to support/inform a range of processes and activities.

2. Communicating ideas and information

- > Communicate effectively with others using a range of spoken, written, graphic and non-verbal means of expression.
- > Communication includes:
 - Listening and understanding
 - Speaking clearly and directly
 - Writing to the needs of an audience
 - Reading and interpreting independently
 - Using persuasion, negotiation, empathy and assertiveness appropriately
 - Communicate in culturally appropriate ways

3. Planning and organising activities

- > Plan and organise work activities (one's own; others)
- > Recognise the importance of personal/home life activity
- > Demonstrate reliability in relation to work activity
- > Use time/resources effectively
- > Prioritise effectively
- > Monitor own performance
- > Participate in continuous improvement and planning processes

4. Solving problems

- > Use initiative and independence in identifying problems/potential problems
- > Apply problem-solving strategies in purposeful ways
- > Apply critical thinking broadly to work activity
- > Apply creative approaches to achieve desired outcomes

5. Using mathematical ideas and techniques

- > Use ideas such as number, sequencing and space, measurement
- > Use mathematics in budgeting and financial applications
- > Use approximation, estimation for practical purposes

6. Working with others and in teams

- > Work effectively with a diverse range of people (irrespective of age, race, gender, religion or political persuasion).
- > Work as a member of a team to achieve a common goal
- > Apply team work to a range of situations
- > Identify strengths of team members
- > Work with others one-to-one
- > Establish appropriate relationships with others in the work environment
- > Give feedback positively
- > Receive feedback constructively

7. Using technology

- > Apply physical and sensory skills needed to operate equipment
- > Use scientific and technological principles to explore and adapt systems
- > Apply a range of basic IT skills
- > Demonstrate ability and willingness to learn new IT skills
- > Apply OH&S knowledge

8. Self Management and Learning

- > Adapt to new and changing workplace situations and cultures
- > Be creative
- > Develop strategies for coping with contingencies
- > Invest time and effort in own learning
- > Contribute to the learning community (in the workplace)
- > Critically reflect on own learning
- > Demonstrate positive attributes of self through personal presentation
- > Take responsibility at an appropriate level
- > Demonstrate ability to deal with pressure/manage stress

9. Global and Sustainable perspective

- > Demonstrate respect for the interdependence of life by:
 - Applying principles of sustainability to work practices (eg. Minimising waste, conservation of scarce resources, etc)
 - Engaging in ethical work practices
- > Develop a strategic, creative, long-term vision

What learning strategies work best to help learners develop these skills?

Helping learners to develop the range of transferable skills requires active learning strategies where learners take as much responsibility for their own learning as they are able. Naturally this varies with the individual learner. You could find that a 17 year old who has disengaged with formal education and who is coming, in the first instance, to TAFE because it is required by Centrelink may not be ready to take much responsibility for their own learning. Developing the confidence to do this takes time. A mature-aged person who is coming to TAFE to gain skills to re-enter the workforce may be ready for accepting a good deal more responsibility. Other learners may be ready to accept more still. Each learner's needs are different and considering and planning for individual learning styles and needs is the starting point.

The more closely the learning is linked to real life (or real work) the more meaningful it is. Problem-based learning and project-based learning are active strategies that foster transferable skills. Problem-solving, collecting, organising, analysing information and self management are all fostered by these types of learning experiences. Group work may help to develop the capability to communicate effectively and work in a team. New learning technologies can expand the range of learning strategies available to you. Using the UB WebCT learning platform can assist learners to develop Information and Communications Technology (ICT) skills. National initiatives highlight the need for learning to be flexible and learner-directed.

It is important for these skills to be 'explicit' in your delivery. What does this mean? Basically, it means that you cannot assume learners understand the importance of these skills or that they see the connections between the learning methods you have specifically chosen and their development of these skills. When you require learners to solve problems in a classroom or workplace training session, talk to them about the importance of problem-solving skills and that you have set up this learning experience to assist them to apply their skills in this area. Reinforcing the importance of these skills for entering employment helps learners to understand the essential nature of these skills. You can draw on your own industry experience in discussions with learners to help make the learning more meaningful.



These skills are best developed holistically rather than as individual skills. For example, planning and organising are inherent in much technical work that learners undertake. Communicating effectively is an essential part of working with others or in a team. Teaching sustainable work practices can be integrated into learning in much the same way that we embed Occupational Health and Safety.

What about assessment?

Just how do you go about assessing these skills in our learning programs? There are many different approaches being used across the VET system. Rob Denton, Key Competency Co-ordinator at Torrens Valley TAFE, SA uses a 'prove, improve' model. Learners assess their own achievement of the key competencies at the required performance level when they decide they are ready. In essence, learners 'prove' their capability by completing a validated self-assessment form with evidence that they have the indicated level of competence. Then they have their evidence validated by an 'authorised' person--primarily the TAFE lecturers. By going through the validated self-assessment process, they also 'improve' their generic competency by becoming more familiar with what is required and by having to demonstrate and communicate these skills to others. Go to Rob's website to learn more: <http://www.tvtafe.sa.edu.au/linkup/>



The TAFE Division of the University of Ballarat has approved a 'graded assessment' model based around generic/transferrable skills. This model requires that a learner first be assessed as competent. Then, additional criteria based around generic skills are applied to determine performance beyond competence. These higher levels of performance are described as: 'competence with merit' and 'competence with distinction'. For more information about this model for assessment go to:

http://www.ballarat.edu.au/vfed/teaching_support/learning_assessment/graded_assessment.shtml

Assessing generic skills is an ongoing area of investigation across the VET sector and if you would like more information about possible assessment methods, please speak to a TAFE Curriculum Officer.

How can I ensure I teach/assess these skills?

The following table will help you to check that you are incorporating the relevant Transferable Skills into your teaching and assessing practice. Again, if you teach only one or two very technical units, the full range of skills may not apply, but across a complete qualification, the full range should be addressed. Not every dot point will be included in every course or qualification. The numbered headings, however, identify a group of transferable skills needed by your learners. It may be helpful to discuss which of the dot points in each area apply to the course or qualification you teach with other teachers and the Head of Programs in your area.

Mapping the Transferable Skills to your Learning Program

Transferable Skill	Where do I 'teach' this skill (in which unit/module)?	How do I teach this skill? (learning strategy)	How do I assess this skill?
1. Collecting, analysing, organising and using information			
> Locate, sift and sort information			
> Evaluate information, sources and methods used to obtain			
> Use information appropriately to support/inform a range of processes/activities			
2. Communicate ideas and information			
> Communicate effectively with others using a range of spoken, written, graphic and non-verbal means of expression			
> Communication includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening and understanding • Speaking clearly and directly • Writing to the needs of an audience • Reading and interpreting independently • Using persuasion, negotiation, empathy and assertiveness appropriately 			
> Communicate in culturally appropriate ways			
3. Planning and organising activities			
> Plan and organise work activities (one's own; others)			
> Recognise the importance of personal/home life activity			
> Demonstrate reliability in relation to work activity			
> Use time and resources effectively			
> Prioritise effectively			
> Monitor own performance			
> Participate in continuous improvement and planning processes			

Transferable Skill

Where do I 'teach' this skill (in which unit/module)?

How do I teach this skill? (learning strategy)

How do I assess this skill?

4. Solving problems

- > Use initiative and independence in identifying problems/potential problems
- > Apply problem-solving strategies in purposeful ways
- > Apply critical thinking broadly to work activity
- > Apply creative approaches to achieve desired outcomes

5. Using mathematical ideas and techniques

- > Use ideas such as number, sequencing, space, measurement
- > Use mathematics in budgeting and financial applications
- > Use approximation, estimation for practical purposes

6. Working with others and in Teams

- > Work effectively with a diverse range of people (irrespective of age, race, gender, religion, or political persuasion)
- > Work as a member of a team to achieve a common goal
- > Apply team work to a range of situations
- > Identify strengths of team members
- > Work with others and one-to-one
- > Establish appropriate relationships with others in the work environment
- > Give feedback positively
- > Receive feedback constructively

7. Use technology

- > Apply physical and sensory skills needed to operate equipment

Transferable Skill

Where do I 'teach' this skill (in which unit/module)?

How do I teach this skill? (learning strategy)

How do I assess this skill?

- > Use scientific and technological principles to explore and adapt systems
- > Apply a range of basic IT skills
- > Demonstrate ability and willingness to learn new IT skills
- > Apply OH&S knowledge

8. Self Management and Learning

- > Adapt to new and changing workplace situations and cultures
- > Be creative
- > Develop strategies for coping with contingencies
- > Develop strategies for dealing with stress
- > Invest time and effort into own learning
- > Contribute to the learning community (in the workplace)
- > Critically reflect on own learning
- > Demonstrate (communicate?) positive attributes of self through personal presentation
- > Take responsibility at an appropriate level
- > Demonstrate ability to deal with pressure/manage stress

9. Global and sustainable perspective

- > Demonstrate respect for the interdependence of life by:
 - Applying principles of sustainability to work practices (eg. minimising waste, conservation of scarce resources, etc.)
 - Engage in ethical work practices
- > Develop a strategic, creative, long-term vision

Appendix 1: Mayer Key Competencies ¹

Key competency	Performance Level 1	Performance Level 2	Performance Level 3
Collecting, analysing and organising information	Access and record > Single source	Access, select and record > More than one source	Access, evaluate and organise > A range of sources
Communicating ideas and information	Simple > Familiar setting	Complex > Particular context	Complex > A variety of contexts
Planning and organising activities	Under supervision	With guidance	Independently initiate and evaluate complex activities
Working with others and in teams	Familiar activities	Help formulate and achieve goals	Collaborate in complex activities
Using mathematical ideas and techniques	Simple tasks	Select appropriate complex tasks	Evaluate and adapt as appropriate for task
Solving problems	Routine > Minimal supervision Exploratory > Close supervision	Routine > Independently Exploratory > With guidance	Complex problems > Implement systematic approach > Explain process
Using technology	Reproduce or present basic product or service	Construct, organise or operate products or services	Design or tailor products or services

Victorian Learning and Employment Skills Council (VLESC) : Generic Skills List

Includes the above Mayer Key Competencies, plus:

Cultural understanding	Self-management	Learning to learn
------------------------	-----------------	-------------------

¹ Australian National Training Authority, BSZ98



Appendix 2: Employability Skills Framework

Employability Skills Definition: Skills required not only to gain employment but also to progress within an enterprise so as to achieve one's potential and contribute successfully to enterprise strategic directions. Employability skills are also sometimes referred to as generic skills or capabilities or key competencies.

Personal Attributes that contribute to overall employability

- | | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| > Loyalty | > Reliability | > A sense of humour | > A balanced attitude to work and home life |
| > Commitment | > Personal Presentation | > An ability to deal with pressure | > Motivation |
| > Honesty and integrity | > Common sense | | > Adaptability |
| > Enthusiasm | > Positive self esteem | | |

Skill	Element	(facets of the skill that employers identified as important noting that the mix and priority of these facets would vary from job to job)
Communication that contributes to productive and harmonious relations across employees and customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Listening and understanding > Speaking clearly and directly > Writing to the needs of the audience > Negotiating responsively > Reading independently > Speaking and writing in languages other than English 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Using numeracy > Understanding the needs of internal and external customers > Establishing and using networks > Being assertive > Sharing information
Team work that contributes to productive working relationships and outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Working across different and irrespective of gender, race, religion or political persuasion > Working as an individual and as a member of a team > Knowing how to define a role as a part of the team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Applying team work to a range of situations eg. futures planning, crisis problem solving > Identifying the strengths of the team members > Coaching and mentoring skills including giving feedback
Problem solving that contributes to productive outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Developing creative, innovative solutions > Developing practical solutions > Showing independence and initiative in identifying problems and solving them > Solving problems in teams > Applying a range of strategies to problem solving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Using mathematics including budgeting and financial management to solve problems > Applying problem solving strategies across a range of areas > Resolving customer concerns in relation to complex projects issues
Self Management that contributes to employee satisfaction and growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Having a personal vision and goals > Evaluating and monitoring own performance > Articulating own ideas and visions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Having knowledge and confidence in own ideas and visions satisfaction and growth > Taking responsibilities
Planning and Organising that contributes to long and short term strategic planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Managing time and priorities - setting time lines, coordinating tasks for self and with others > Being resourceful > Taking initiative and making decisions > Adapting resource allocations to cope with contingencies > Establishing clear project goals and deliverables > Allocating people and other resources including time management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Participants in continuous improvement and planning processes > Developing a vision and a proactive plan to accompany it > Predicting-weighing up risk, evaluate alternatives and apply evaluation criteria > Collecting, analysing and organising information > Understanding basic business systems and their relationships
Technology that contributes to effective execution of tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Having a range of IT skills > Applying IT as a management tool > Using IT to organise data > Being willing to learn new IT skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Having the OHS knowledge to apply technology > Having the physical capacity to apply technology eg. manual dexterity
Learning that contributes to ongoing improvement and expansion in employee and company operations and outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Managing own learning > Contributing to the community at the workplace > Using a range of mediums to learn: mentoring, peer support and networking, IT, courses > Applying learning to 'technical' issues (eg learning about products) and 'people' issues (eg interpersonal and cultural aspects of work) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Having enthusiasm for ongoing learning > Being willing to learn in any setting-on and off work > Being open to new ideas and techniques > Being prepared to invest time and effort in learning new skills > Acknowledging the need to learn in order to accommodate change
Initiative and Enterprise that contribute to innovative outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Adapting to new situations > Developing a strategic, creative, long term vision > Being creative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Identifying opportunities not obvious to others > Translating ideas into actions > Generating a range of options > Initiating innovative solutions

Source: DEST, Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Business Council of Australia (2002) *Employability Skills for the future*. Reproduced with kind permission from the Australian Chambers of Commerce and Industry.



Appendix 3 Case Study: Skills for doing the 'hard sell'

Writing by its nature is a solitary occupation. Some writers like it that way. But when it comes to

promoting their work, they have to get out there and do the 'hard sell'. This inevitably means communicating effectively with a range of people in order to become known and ultimately succeed in an extremely competitive industry. It therefore comes as a shock to many students enrolled in the Diploma of Arts (Professional Writing & Editing) and the Bachelor of Arts/ Diploma of Arts (Professional Writing & Editing) courses here at the University of Ballarat that even though they want to become writers, they also need to be good communicators across a range of media.

A core (compulsory) module in the Diploma course is Industry Overview. This is a one semester, seminar program in which students hear from those who make their living (or at least part of it) from the writing, editing and publishing industry. Because the industry is so diverse and competitive, aspiring writers of all genres need to know how to promote themselves and their work. The reality is that they can't all be Bryce Courtney, but in many cases their writing can provide them with some income, however small.

In order to become 'known' in an industry like this, generic skills are essential. These are the skills that enable us to function effectively in our dealings with others generally, and in particular within a work environment. They include:

- > Working with others and in teams
- > Collecting, analysing, organising and using information
- > Using technology
- > Self management and learning
- > Planning and organising activities
- > Solving problems
- > Communicating ideas and information

As this years' Industry Overview, facilitator I have endeavoured to alert students to the importance of these skills in the development of their careers. The course attracts people from wide-ranging backgrounds and ages. Of course, older course participants bring many life skills with them and in general are very open to these ideas because they can readily identify with

them. It is sometimes the younger participants who need to become aware that the development of these skills is important to their future. In either case, all students need to understand how they can use these skills to their individual advantage.

During class time, I asked Industry Overview participants to contribute their ideas on those skills (apart from the technical skills of the job) which make effective members of a workplace in the writing and publishing industry. Some ideas they saw as important included adaptability, confidence, leadership skills, research skills and being able to verbally communicate ideas. The next stage was to have them look at where these skills fit into the Mayer Key Competencies from both personal and collective viewpoints, ie their Top 5 and the group's Top 5. The final part was to get individuals to think about where their ideas fit into the Key Competencies and for them to consider personal examples of what evidence could be provided from the Professional Writing course so far.

Assessment of these skills is incorporated into an assessment item for Industry Overview, Employment Opportunities. The module requires students to choose three different careers in the writing industry and gather information about these jobs from a range of sources, including contact with industry experts. They must describe the skills needed for each job, including educational requirements or skills preferences. They complete this task by making recommendations about the jobs which are suited to their skills and abilities. Transferable skills can be interwoven throughout this task and I tell students that they are expected to include discussion of these as well as the technical skills in their assessment submission.

The main objective here is awareness raising, to get students to value their transferable skills as much as the technical skills they have acquired, as this may be the edge they need when seeking employment or promoting their work. The challenge for me is to keep transferable skills at the forefront of students' thoughts, encouraging them to speak or write easily and fluently about all of their individual skills and abilities.



Appendix 3 Case Study: **Moving Ideas into Action!**

When you first meet Trevor, he comes across as cool and calm. But get him talking about the things he

is passionate about and he shows you just how animated he can be! Trevor is definitely passionate about his students and Trevor is definitely passionate about generic skills. He teaches in an electrical pre-apprenticeship program, so many of his students are young and some have not previously had good experiences in the formal education system. He tells me about one young bloke who worries him. Trevor worries that he is only just beginning to 'get through' to this guy, time is running out, and Trevor wonders if the young man will be able to consolidate his new-found but shaky confidence sufficiently to keep moving forward in a positive life direction. That's the kind of teacher Trevor is. Trevor understands the critical importance of developing positive relationships with his students and letting them know that he cares what happens to them.

Trevor thinks that building generic skills is absolutely essential for his young learners' success not only in their training programs but also in life. The one generic skill that Trevor sees as most important is 'problem solving'. Why does he think solving problems is fundamental? Well, as Trevor explains it, employers want to hire people who can solve problems. If you work as an electrician, you are solving problems all the time. Not only that, if you can solve problems you can just about demonstrate all the other generic skills as well. For example, as a team member, you need to be able to solve human problems---work out what is wrong and go about finding solutions in a systematic way. If you can solve problems, it will improve your communication skills as well, and problem solving is fundamental to using technology effectively.

What does Trevor do in the classroom to help these young learners develop generic skills? In his unit Building Materials and Hand Skills Trevor assigns pairs of learners a research project: to investigate a building material that may be encountered by an electrician. The first task for the learners is to select one building material to investigate, for example: concrete, timber, glass, bricks or plaster. Class time is allocated to conduct the investigation so that Trevor can observe the process and assess the formation or development of the generic skills including:

- > Working with others and in teams
- > Collecting, analysing, organising and using information
- > Using technology
- > Self management and learning
- > Planning and organising activities
- > Solving problems
- > Communicating ideas and information

At the end of the investigation, the learners write up a report on their findings and they also present their findings to the class. As Trevor explains, this helps him or her develop confidence to speak to clients (something every electrician must do). The written reports must be word-processed, which ensures that technology skills are demonstrated. In addition much of the information that learners will use in their investigation is accessed via the Internet. The learners must plan their time to complete the task by the due date; they must work together, solve problems and manage their own learning within the class.

The assessment of these skills is critical to the overall assessment of the unit. This means that the assessment of generic skills is 'embedded' into the technical performance criteria within the unit; students are unable to demonstrate their technical competence without demonstrating an appropriate performance level of generic skills.

Trevor is clearly a teacher who reflects about his teaching practice. As a member of the Transferable Skills project, he has become far more aware of the need for his students to develop generic/transferable skills, and his teaching of these skills has become more explicit. When he encourages his learners to solve problems, he now tells them that this is what he is doing. He gives positive feedback to each learner who takes a small step towards solving a problem. He also mentions regularly that employers want staff who can solve problems. He reminds them that solving problems is fundamental to being an electrician!

Occasionally Trevor speculates on the reasons why some learners in his classes come without well-developed problem-solving skills. He thinks about his own teaching methods carefully and he tries to ensure that his methods meet the needs of the learners. Really, isn't this what good teaching is all about?

Where do I get more information?

There are many places where you can get more information about these skills and their application to your teaching and assessment practice. Why not begin with the School Representatives in the UB TAFE Division 2003-2004 Transferable Skills project? They are listed below:

School Representatives and Facilitators:



Jenny Croft, School of Business Services
Mark Daffey, School of Business Services
Wendy Draayers, School of Business Services
Debbie Eagles, TAFE Curriculum Officer
Virginia Fenelon, Head of TAFE Programs
Trevor Ferguson, School of Manufacturing Services
Sue Goodbourn, TAFE Curriculum Officer
Penny Hollands, School of Human Services
Mandy Kirsopp, School of Human Services
Kevin Martin, School of Manufacturing Services
Bruce Marshall, School of Manufacturing Services
Iain Sedgman, School of Business Services
Glen Strange, School of Manufacturing Services
Jill Taylor, School of Business Services
Malcolm Trainor, School of Business Services
Irene Warfe, School of Human Services

Special mention:

Lorraine Yeomans, School of Human Services
Julianne Krusche, School of Human Services



Or go online:

1. http://www.ballarat.edu.au/vfed/teaching_support/ed_projects/proj_trans_skills.shtml
2. You can also log in to our WebCT site, but you will need to register with the WebCT administrator to obtain a log-in and password.
Contact: Lloyd Stinton, Online Courses Administrator.

Where else can I get information?

TAFE Curriculum Officers can also provide you with additional information.

Check out some case studies in Appendix 3.