

Title	Transferable Skills Training Programs and Activities
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Citation	CGEI アニュアルレポート 2012: 275-279
Issue Date	2013-09
Type	Research Paper
Text version	publisher
URL	http://hdl.handle.net/10119/11531
Rights	
Description	. センター関連イベント報告 / Event Report, (5) トランスファラブル・スキル ミーティング / Transferable Skills Group

Transferable Skills Training Programs and Activities

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トランスファラブル・スキルのトレーニングプログラムと活動

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Japanese Abstract: 多くの大学の大学院プログラムにおいて、主な目的や理念は、通常、学術研究に関連したスキルと定義されたアカデミックスキルを学生に修得させることが、長く標準または伝統的な前提となっている。歴史的には、大学院学習の基礎となる前提は、ほとんどの部分において、修了生はアカデミックキャリアを追求することであった。しかし、現在、大学院教育において文化的な変化が起こっている。大学院教育の中でのトランスファラブル・スキル（ジェネリック・スキルもしくは21世紀スキルとしても知られている）の役割と位置は世界中で認識されている。トランスファラブル・スキルとは、あらゆる分野とすべてのレベルにおいて、職業能力の中核を成すスキルや能力である（英国教育雇用省〈Department for Education and Employment, DfEE, UK〉, 1997）。これらスキルには、プロジェクトマネジメント、リーダーシップ、コミュニケーション、チーム作業、問題解決を含む。またこれらのスキルには、モチベーション、当事者意識、責任、エンゲージメント、自信という資質を含む。全米大学雇用者協会（National Association of Colleges and Employers, NACE）が実施した今年の雇用見通し調査によると、これらスキルとより多くが、雇用者が内定者に求める資質である。この調査結果は、英国公式のキャリアサービスを提供するウェブサイト、英国プロスペクタス（Prospectus UK）が公表したリストとちょうど一致している。

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[Key Words: Transferable skills, Motivation, Engagement, Ownership, Responsibility, Ownership, Employability]

Abstract : In most university graduate programs, it has long been a standard or traditional assumption that the main purpose or mission is to help students acquire academic skills, usually defined as skills related for scholarly research. Historically, the underlying premise of graduate studies, for the most part, has been that graduates will pursue academic careers. But there is now a cultural shift in graduate education. The role and place for transferable skills (also known as generic skills, or 21st Century skills) in graduate education is being recognized world-wide. Transferable skills (TS) are *those skills*

that are central to occupational competence in all sectors and at all levels” (Department for Education and Employment DfEE, UK, 1997), and include project management, leadership, communication, working in teams and problem solving. They also include qualities such as motivation, sense of ownership, responsibility, engagement, confidence and communication. These and more are qualities that employers seek in prospective employees, according to a job outlook survey conducted on this subject by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) this year. The findings nicely complement the list published on Prospectus UK, the official UK’s Graduate Careers website.

1 Introduction

There has been a shift in culture in postgraduate education, and in higher education in general. This change has seen the traditional apprentice model being replaced by a new model (Figure 1). This new model is characterized by students having multiple advisory teams, emphasis on formal training, and also on a transparent quality assured education framework. Here at JAIST, most of these changes were implemented when JAIST was founded. A QA assured framework, in the form of admission, supervision, curriculum and graduation policies were developed by CGEI and all four policies have now been accepted at institution level.

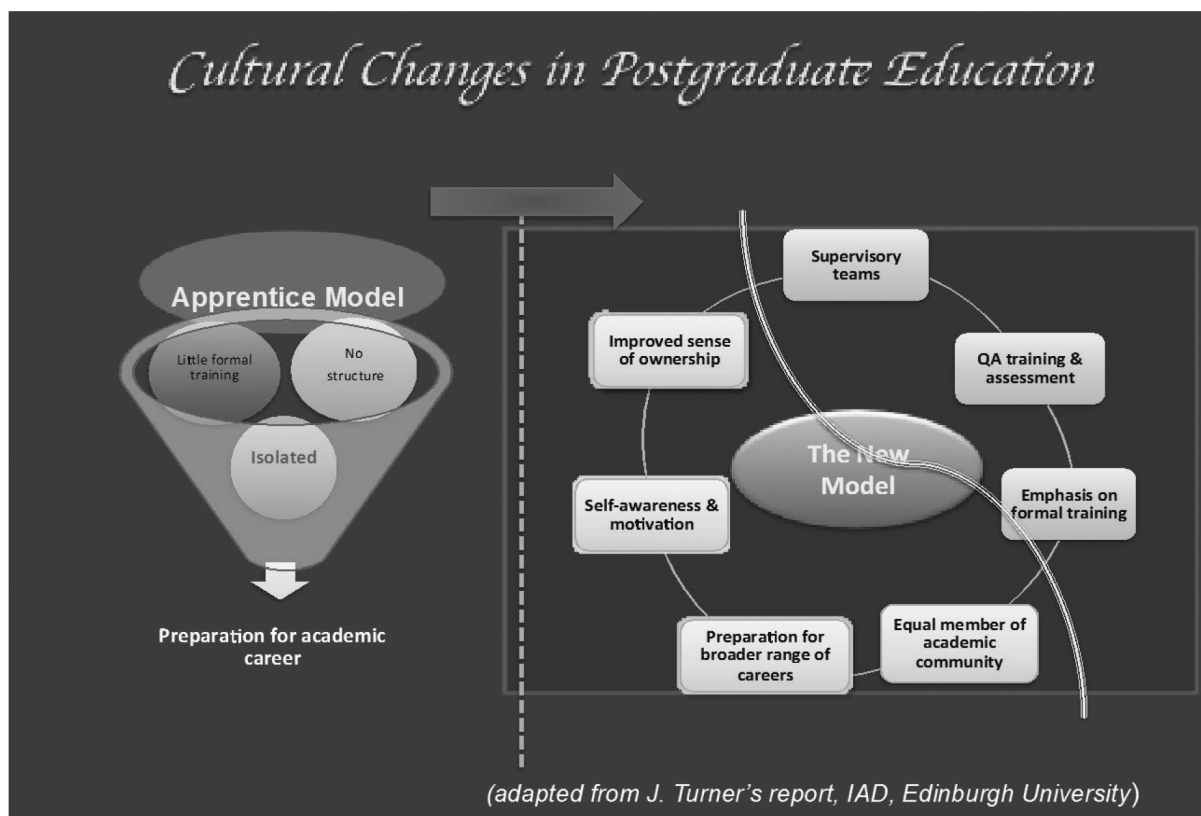


Figure 1. A cultural change in graduate education

Another change in graduate education is the way in which students are taught and/or supervised. In fact, the emphasis on teaching is shifting towards that of learning. By putting ‘learning’ first, students are immediately seen as the prime target. With this, issues such as ‘student-centered learning’, ‘active learning’, ‘student engagement’, ‘self-motivation and awareness’, ‘ownership and responsibility’ have gained huge importance. With all these changes, TS are in the limelight as students, faculty members become increasingly aware that students’ careers are not necessarily going to be academic-orientated. In addition, employers have shown that they prefer well-educated graduates, with depth and breadth in their area of expertise, and also skills that are transferable.

At CGEI, JAIST, during the survey on doctoral degree qualifications, we identified some interesting special features in some of the institutes that could be easily adapted to fit in the JAIST education system in order to improve the quality of students graduating from JAIST, as well as their employability potential. A table summarizing the activities is reported under the survey on criteria for doctoral degree qualification, in this annual report. Here-in, we focus on what we at CGEI are doing towards advancement of TS to our students.

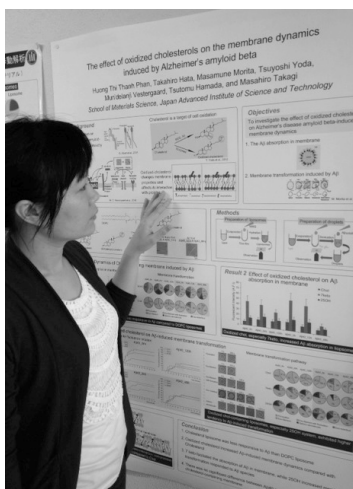
2 Transferable Skills Project at JAIST

At CGEI, we have formed an interdisciplinary and diverse TS project group comprised of one faculty member from each School, one faculty member from Institute of General Education (IGE), four doctoral students from each of the three schools, CGEI Director, three CGEI Research staff, and a staff member. In total, we have 21 members. CGEI Unit Leaders are also involved in various capacities. The group meets once a month, and have informal discussions over lunch.



III. センター関連イベント報告

The first practical activity towards the TS initiative is a JAIST Poster Challenge (JP Challenge).



The purpose of the JAIST Poster Challenge is to encourage students to (i) engage in high quality, sound, and pertinent research; (ii) gain experience in presentation of scientific papers; (iii) demonstrate poise and mental agility before their peers; (iv) develop skills in effective communication for dissemination of research information. More importantly, it is a tremendous opportunity for students to receive feedback from peers and members of faculty from their own as well as different disciplines. The students also get a chance to learn what research other students are undertaking in JAIST. The value of such an opportunity extends beyond scientific benefits.

The students have a forum on which they can advance their transferable skills including language abilities, networking, presentation skills, critical and logical thinking, listening, engagement, and research ownership and responsibility. These abilities are widely recognized as attractive to employers world-wide. We aim to invite local industry representatives to observe and interact with the students, offering them advice and a possibility of establishing valuable connections.

The first JP Challenge will be held during the JAIST Festival in Oct, 2013. Towards implementation of this particular activity, we have formed an organization committee. (i) The CGEI Director Prof. Asano is the senior advisor; (ii) The members of faculty (Professors Yamada-Takamura (MS), Nam (KS), Yoshikawa (IS), and Holden (IGE) are advisors; (iii) coordinator and chair is Mun'delanj Vestergaard (Mun'de, CGEI), (iv) publicity leader is Prof. Hasegawa, and (v) management & finance leader is Sunseong Choe (Sai, CGEI).

Another aim of the TS initiative is to encourage/establish student-led activities at JAIST. Therefore, looking into the near future, the student (voluntary) members of the TS Project have taken on roles that will 'naturally' transition into leaders of the JP Challenge from next year. CGEI staff and other senior faculty and staff members will then act as mentors and/or advisors. The students are therefore, part of the organizing committee for the JP Challenge: (i) vice coordinators & chairs are Wenzhen Wang (MS) and Nguyen Thuy Dung (KS); (ii) publicity members are Didin Wahyudin (IS); Ryo Hatano (IS), Chaianun Damrongra (Tui, KS), Phan Huong (MS) and Hangyu Li (IS); (iii) administration & finance are Hemant Choudhary (MS), Wentao Guo (KS), and Hiroki Himeno (MS); (iv) other supporting roles we have Wei Chen (KS).



The students have already started taking active roles, working independently in small groups and presenting their combined collaborative ideas during TS Project meetings for discussion with the rest of the group.

We are all very excited about this initiative, perhaps the first of its kind in Japan. We hope all students will take this opportunity to showcase their research, communicate, network, and enhance many other skills. But most importantly, enjoy themselves by participating in this pioneering activity. We also hope that faculty members will encourage their students to participate by impressing on them the importance of the JP Challenge to their research and student life.

3 Contact

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