



Life After Teaching... some considerations to jump start your thinking ...

Education is an amazingly versatile degree. Besides teaching, education degree holders can go into education administration, journalism & mass media, public relations and even organizational development/ corporate strategy careers. Additionally, teaching develops a myriad of transferable skills that are essential in the business, government and not-for-profit sectors. These skills include public speaking, leading a team, explaining concepts, and many, many more. In general, your teaching experience should position you well for positions in business, especially communications.

Career change is one of the challenges of today's economy. However, this crossroads provides the opportunity to find your new niche. Your education degree should open up doors for you, but if you find yourself drawn to a career a little further afield (such as PR, for example), continuing education can help ease the transition.

TRANSFERABLE SKILLS -- THE KEYS TO A NEW CAREER

Teaching has given you an amazing array of skills that can easily transfer to another career, and increase the value you bring to a position as a job candidate.

Unlike job-related skills, which are essential to a specific type of work, transferable skills are universally applicable. These skills are called transferable skills because you transfer them from one task to another, one job to the next, and one career to the next. They don't go out of date; they just get better with practice and new experiences.

Typically, you can carry transferable skills from one type of work to another without much effort or training. For this reason, transferable skills are often more important than job related skills. This is especially true if you are planning on changing careers.

For example, almost every type of work requires the ability to effectively work with other people. Essential transferable skills include verbal and written communication, teamwork, and the ability to follow or lead others. Working with people also requires skills for achieving day-to-day priorities like being effective, productive and responsible.

As an educator you have developed skills that are specific to your profession, but you have also honed many, many skills that have universal application and provide some important keys to your future. Keep in mind that the skills that you will bring to your new workplace reach beyond your recent experience in education. We develop transferable skills from birth -- from life experiences, our own education, and other work experiences we may have had. The trick is to identify those skills and label them using a new and perhaps unfamiliar language -- "business speak."

NOTE: Identifying your specific transferable skills is an essential process to your job search. To help you, here is a checklist of skills you may have developed. Examine it thoroughly:

- **Program Planning and Delivery and Project Management**

- ✓ Planning a sequence of events or tasks
- ✓ Adjusting plans due to changes in circumstances
- ✓ Setting appropriate priorities and marshalling resources
- ✓ Designing schedules
- ✓ Efficiently coordinating varied activities
- ✓ Anticipating and preparing for problems that may arise



- **Management/ Supervision**

- ✓ Developing or promoting established standards and directions for adequate work performance. These can come from a higher level, be created at your direction, or with a team of co-workers.
- ✓ Providing clear instructions about performance expectations
- ✓ Overseeing the quality of a task or job performance
- ✓ Ensuring adherence to relevant regulations
- ✓ Supervising the performance of those reporting to you

- **Conflict Resolution**

- ✓ Clearly defining regulations and correct business practice
- ✓ Reducing tension between people
- ✓ Listening carefully, interpreting what is really being said about the grievance
- ✓ Being sympathetic
- ✓ Resolving disputes
- ✓ Promoting understanding of the positions between those in conflict
- ✓ Avoiding emotional approaches to resolutions

- **Decision Making**

- ✓ Making quick decisions under time pressure
- ✓ Deciding a course of action in collaboration with others or independently
- ✓ Making decisions after through research and evaluation of alternatives
- ✓ Deciding on a course of action on your own initiative

- **Controlling / Reviewing**

- ✓ Requiring work be done to meet specifications
- ✓ Controlling the use of resources (including people) to meet objectives
- ✓ Following up with co-workers to expedite completion

- **Motivating**

- ✓ Emphasizing the importance of reaching a work objective
- ✓ Appealing to people to increase their motivation
- ✓ Creating a good team spirit
- ✓ Sustaining the interest of others in projects or tasks
- ✓ Gaining willing cooperation
- ✓ Arousing enthusiasm for a project
- ✓ Getting individuals to carry out an unappealing task
- ✓ Understanding the personal needs or motives of others
- ✓ Providing reassurance for those suffering anxiety
- ✓ Communicating frankly with people in order to increase their motivation

- **Analyzing / Integrating / Interpreting**

- ✓ Interpreting statistical information
- ✓ Interpreting information (e.g., to simplify or explain)
- ✓ Interpreting rules, laws, agreements, etc.
- ✓ Diagnosing problems in systems
- ✓ Summarizing numerical information

- ✓ Summarizing verbal information
- ✓ Evaluating alternatives prior to choice
- ✓ Critically examining information for accuracy / quality
- ✓ Analyzing written information
- ✓ Analyzing numerical information
- **Influencing / Presenting / Instructing**
 - ✓ Making a case to superiors for resources or support
 - ✓ Instructing in the use of tools or implements
 - ✓ Addressing a gathering or audience consisting of a range of ages
 - ✓ Advising on points of procedure
 - ✓ Presenting formal teaching or training sessions
 - ✓ Negotiating on points of dispute
 - ✓ Making a spoken case for a course of action
 - ✓ Arguing a case in a formal meeting or session
- **Writing / Drawing**
 - ✓ Making informal notes as a reminder
 - ✓ Providing clear written information about an issue
 - ✓ Writing instructions for procedures to be followed
 - ✓ Physically drawing graphics or charts
 - ✓ Answering an inquiry in writing
 - ✓ Writing formal correspondence or memoranda
 - ✓ Writing a description of a situation or case

Does this list sound like lots of things that you have done? By now it should be obvious that you have mastered many of these skills and even more! Identifying these skills and being able to talk about them will give you interesting insights to share in job interviews.

For further help identifying your transferable skills and figuring how they might help your career transition, check the following resources:

- www.d.umn.edu/student/loon/car/self/career_transfer_survey.html
- www.placementmanual.com/career/career-11.html
- <http://www.csuchico.edu/plc/jobskills.html>
- www.nextsteps.org/career/transfer.html -
- careerplanning.about.com/od/careerchoicechan/a/transferable.htm

By the way- teachers have found “life after teaching” as ...

- Trainers in a corporate environments
- Nursing and health care fields [especially science types]
- Writers: freelance or staff writers, or technical writing
- Translators
- Program developers and project managers in business or not-for-profit organizations
- Fitness / exercise program leaders or educators
- Administrators: Office managers
- Corporate salespeople and sales managers
- Not-for-Profit program administrators and directors
- Community planners – both in government and not-for-profit arenas
- Financial planners
- Ministry and pastoral work
- Teachers of English as a Second Language



- Workforce development staff and administrators
- Web designers
- Computer network administrators
- Computer programmers, systems analysts, and related managers
- **Entrepreneurs**
Many have found new success as entrepreneurs. Some examples ...
- *The Bee Bouncer* programs- developed by an area resident who retired with 30 years experience as a physical education teacher. It teaches children to work with basketballs and coordinated movements and to learn routines similar to those that the Harlem Globetrotters perform. The program has been active in Bay Village, Ohio for the last 7 years. Hundreds of children have participated in pre-game and half-time performances at high school and college games, Globetrotters and Cleveland Cavaliers games
- A young mom taught middle school for 9 years. While taking time off from classroom teaching in order to raise her children, she began home schooling her children at the preschool level. She developed many of her own home-school teaching and learning tools. *Exercards* is one of her inventions. These exercise cards can be used to kick start a children's exercise program and provides great activities for 3 to 6 year-old kids. She continues to work with children and develop educational and fun products.
- In 2003, Mitch and Heather , 43 and 38, respectively, returned to the U.S. after teaching for 12 years in China, Egypt and Saudi Arabia. They wanted a business of their own, but didn't have a choice in mind. Their direction took shape when Heather repeatedly came home raving about her 30-minute *Curves* workout. The couple wondered if there was an equivalent men-only fitness franchise in their area. When their search turned up nothing, they knew they had found their niche. Cashing in on Heather's background as a physical education teacher, they invested their life savings in opening a *Cuts Fitness for Men* franchise, and got ready for a workout. Says Heather, "We threw everything we had in the pot and went for it." It worked.
- Many teachers are still teaching – at home- for on-line education delivery organizations. A little web-based detective work can help here.
- Another area teacher is developing a business supporting home schooling efforts.