

# CSP E-Lesson 3, Fall 2008

**Words of Wisdom:** "As a radiology technician, I constantly learn about new equipment and methods. I have to be re-certified for my profession routinely.

*Lou Grainger, 24, Radiology Technician, Savannah GA*



## How Do You Get There from Here?

"Cameron, I heard you're starting a new job. You're going to work with garbage?" Ray seems shocked as he greets his friend with a smile and a handshake outside the local hardware store.

"Well, it's really industrial waste, Ray, like waste products from hospitals and scientific companies. Some of it is hazardous, and you have to wear white suits and take showers after you touch the containers. I saw a documentary on television about how much hazardous waste is being created each year and the new methods that are being used to treat the waste. So I decided to look into it. Hazardous waste technicians are in big demand," Cameron replies.

"I'd love to get into a career with real potential, but where do you start when it's a job you never heard of?" Ray asks. "When I graduated, they didn't teach about garbage!"

"Jobs are changing, and you don't have to sit in a class to get educated any more, Ray," Cameron speaks enthusiastically, "I went to a career center to learn about becoming a hazardous waste technician, but no local schools have courses about industrial waste, so I completed two courses online to prepare for the job."

Ray asked a good question, "How do you learn about jobs you don't know exist? How do you prepare for those jobs? Two ways are listed below; add four more items to the list.

- |                                 |          |
|---------------------------------|----------|
| 1. <u>Study trade journals</u>  | 4. _____ |
| 2. <u>Take advanced courses</u> | 5. _____ |
| 3. _____                        | 6. _____ |

## Digital Librarian Needed

Picture a library with no books! See yourself as the librarian! What would your duties be each day? The birth of digital libraries, with information stored electronically instead of in books, has created great changes in a librarian's career.

Librarians educated 15 years ago wouldn't recognize many of the courses that library science students study today. And if you plan to be a librarian when you graduate, you'll use new, cutting edge library technology. As that also becomes obsolete in a few years, you'll have to learn even newer technology. And on and on it will go throughout your career.

In fact, everyone who deals with information in their job, including a train dispatcher, a medical records clerk, or a television broadcaster can expect their technical skills and education to need updating more than once during their lifetime. The almost day-to-day changes in information technology demand it.

### Take a Look at How Careers Change

Though you may not plan to be a librarian, you can see the pattern your own career may take by looking at what has happened with college courses for librarians in the last few years. Place a check mark by each course that you think might not have existed 15 years ago.

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|---|---|
| 1. ___ Cataloging and classifying book titles | 9. ___ Website management                       |
| 2. ___ Internet information resources         | 10. ___ Reading motivation techniques           |
| 3. ___ Software project management            | 11. ___ Digital imaging                         |
| 4. ___ Literature for young adults            | 12. ___ Assisting and instructing library users |
| 5. ___ Developing Web-based bibliographies    | 13. ___ Developing library book collections     |
| 6. ___ Foundations of librarianship           | 14. ___ Search engines and online research      |
| 7. ___ Digital library technology             | 15. ___ Database management                     |
| 8. ___ Library management                     |   |

## Digital Librarian Needed

### Presto Chango

Choose an industry that interests you and describe one change in the last 15 years that affects the education a person in the industry needs today. Make up the name of a course that you believe a student might take today that probably wasn't needed 15 years ago. For example, when computer chips appeared in cars, auto technicians had to learn to use computerized diagnostic equipment.

Your career choice \_\_\_\_\_

Change in the industry in the last 15 years \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Course title \_\_\_\_\_

Guess one change that might occur in this same industry in the next 15 years that will affect the education needed. For example, people often talk about the "paperless office," meaning that some day all tasks that require paper documents will be done electronically. This will require all workers to use electronic methods to handle paper, even material handlers on loading docks who will electronically control their shipping and receiving paperwork. (This method is already used in some companies like FedEx® and UPS®.) Make up the name of a course you believe a student preparing to work in this industry will be required to take in the next few years, one that today's students don't need.

Your career choice (Same as above) \_\_\_\_\_

Anticipated change in the industry in the next 15 years \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Course needed \_\_\_\_\_

## Out with the Old, in with the New

"That's right, we're expanding the online digital media division and laying people off in the print departments of our magazines and newspapers," Phil Burbin, the CEO of *Teen Life* publishing, says to his second in command.

"The industry is changing so fast that I'm letting a good print editor with ten years experience go at the same time that I have a recruiter at the university looking for someone with digital editing skills," Phil shakes his head. "Let's face it; if they can't insert a hyperlink and upload photos, and if they don't know what a Web feed is, then their jobs are in danger."

The Internet and information technology advances have changed the jobs of journalists, writers, editors and others in the publishing industry. Like employees in many other careers, the staff at publishing companies have found their technical skills becoming obsolete. Their other abilities, though, which are called transferable skills, are in great demand and can be applied to many different careers. These never change and will be important when they apply for other jobs.

Employers today often place more emphasis on transferable skills and personal traits than on technical skills because they know how quickly technical skills can become obsolete. Here is a list of transferable skills that employers find desirable.

Learning constantly and quickly

Enabling and promoting change

Adaptability

Fitting in

Handling details

Accepting responsibility

Dealing with rapid growth

Awareness of new trends and technologies

Ability to communicate well

Expressing ideas

Working in different environments

Organizing

## Out with the Old, in with the New (Continued)

Two lists of skills related to jobs in publishing follow. One shows transferable skills that will last for a lifetime and the other shows technical skills that might become obsolete over time. Add three skills to each list.

### Transferable Skills

Fact-checking skills

Interviewing skills

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### Technical Skills

Photoshopping

Blogging

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Earlier you selected an industry that interests you. Using the same industry, create a list of Transferable Skills and a list of Technical skills that are needed. You may repeat some of the skills from part above if they are appropriate.

An industry that interests me \_\_\_\_\_

### Transferable skills

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### Technical Skills

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## Transferable Skills 101

Transferable skills and abilities, such as flexibility and communication, may not appear to be "learnable."

They may seem to be qualities you are born with. However, transferable skills and abilities can be learned, practiced, and improved on.

Think about it, executives at the top of our country's best-known companies don't use their technical skills much anymore, even though they may have started their careers relying on those technical skills. Today, they make decisions, communicate, manage, and lead, all of which depend on transferable skills and abilities. Because of these, they have worked themselves into positions where they may earn millions of dollars every year.

When you have a chance, do you improve your transferable skills and abilities? If "Yes," good for you! If "No", why not? In each situation below, the employee has an excellent opportunity to improve. Which choice should the person make in order to expand his or her transferable skills and abilities?

Transferable Ability: *Flexibility*

Your boss arranges for you to attend a training session with other team members to learn a new solution for digital imaging. You'll have to get out of bed an hour early and ride 40 miles to arrive in time for the presentation.

- \_\_\_\_\_ a. You are happy with the system you are currently using. It took a long time to learn and you do a good job with it. You face the training session with dread. You don't want to go to classes, and you'll have to put in some personal time to practice.
- \_\_\_\_\_ b. You imagine the good things that might result from learning the new methods, so you make a list of questions you will ask.
- \_\_\_\_\_ c. You feel disgusted and complain to your co-workers because every time you get comfortable with your job, something changes.

## Transferable Skills 101 (Continued)

Transferable ability: *Skill at working on a team*

Vicki, a co-worker, recently left the company for another job. Your boss asks you to work with a new team member on a project that you and Vicki have almost completed.

- \_\_\_\_ a. You are polite to the new team member, but you don't allow him to have any real input because you'd have to answer so many questions and give so much information.
- \_\_\_\_ b. You explain to the boss that at this point it would be easier to finish the project by yourself.
- \_\_\_\_ c. You welcome the newcomer and listen to his ideas because you think he may suggest different ways of looking at things that will improve the project.

Transferable ability: *Good verbal skills*

In order to get a promotion, you must take on more responsibilities, including making presentations to clients.

- \_\_\_\_ a. You are terrified of speaking in front of groups. You decide the promotion isn't worth it.
- \_\_\_\_ b. You know you don't speak well so you look for another job that doesn't require contact with clients.
- \_\_\_\_ c. You take a course in presentation skills, where you can learn speaking techniques and receive critiques.

Transferable ability: *Interacting with people from diverse backgrounds*

Your boss wants all employees to attend company functions and you know that a great deal of networking occurs at these social events.

- \_\_\_\_ a. You attend the company functions, but stick with your own friends and immediate co-workers.
- \_\_\_\_ b. You introduce yourself to strangers and try to learn at least three interesting facts about them.
- \_\_\_\_ c. You are polite when you are introduced to people, but return quickly to your comfort zone.