

Exercise - Tool #5 – Part 1: Brainstorming your experiences

Before you can do an assessment, you need to recall the experiences where you acquired your various knowledge and skills.

Brainstorm away.

The first step is to make an exhaustive list of your experiences that may have relevance in a job. Your life experience is NOT just a list of courses. Instead, focus on skills/knowledge that you achieved in the classes/labs, etc. The same is true for any experience (whether paid or volunteer), leadership experiences, clubs, events sponsored organizations in which you have been actively involved...and many others. Keep master list of everything you've done because you won't remember everything months years later.

Focus on skills, knowledge, experience, and projects on your resume.

Be specific.

⇒ Focus on making notes about the experience AND the knowledge/skills gained. This means making notes about your level of expertise or breadth of experience that has led to a skill or some knowledge that you possess. Even a few sentences can be helpful down the road. Projects are great items to illustrate your skills.

Make use of your immediate network – your classmates and colleagues.

⇒ Consider working with a group. This is a great exercise to do with a study group, or even in an SPS chapter meeting. Working with a group of students who have shared classes, labs, and extracurricular activities with you can be a great way to help remember all the things that you have accomplished as a student. It can also give you ideas about things you might **need to work on** to expand your experience and increase your set of knowledge and skills.

Try to stay organized.

⇒ Use the template below to organize your life experiences. You should feel free to reconfigure this table in a way that makes it easier for you. Remember the exercise templates are available online if you would rather do an electronic brainstorm sheet. **You may have some experiences that fall into more than one category.**

Experiences (template)

Classes / training / workshops/ tutorials	Leadership experiences / group activities / professional associations / clubs and societies
Jobs: research experiences / internships / volunteer work	Hobbies / clubs / independent projects / other activities

Identifying My Skills – An Assessment Worksheet

Use the skills assessment activity guidelines to work through the process of developing a skill statement for your resume.

Skill category: _____

Back to brainstorming: Write down all the experiences that are related to your attainment of this skill.

Tell it: Draft a bullet point related to this skill.

Refine the language: Rework your bullet point, focusing on *what you know how to do* and *how well you know how to do it*. You may want to do a few drafts and get feedback from others on which is most clear, concise, and meaningful.

Show it: Write down a few anecdotes that demonstrate your related skills.

My Skills Summary (Start on page 35)

Skill:	Story:
Skill:	Story:
Skill:	Story:
Skill:	Story:
Skill:	Story:
Skill:	Story: