



BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES GRADUATE PROGRAM

Professional Development Workshop Series 2016

How to Start a Job Search - or What Do I Do with this PhD?

Exercise 2: Identifying your skill set

1. For this exercise, you will identify a single activity associated with your duties as a graduate student.
2. Once you have identified that activity, list as many specific tasks associated with the activity in the given time.
3. Each person in the group should identify one of their specific tasks and then, as a group, brainstorm as many skills as possible that are required to accomplish that task.

For example, if I were to do this exercise in my capacity as a facilitator for this workshop, then my responses to the prompts above would be:

1. A single activity associated with presenting a workshop is identifying and meeting the learning goals for the activity.
2. A few tasks associated with that activity are:
 - a. Identifying learning outcomes
 - b. Determining the format and audience
 - c. Preparing materials
3. Skills associated with task c, preparing materials are:
 - a. Organization
 - b. Communication
 - c. Familiarization with learning modalities and best practices
 - d. Project management

When you do this exercise on your own, you should include all of the activities associated with your life (including outside activities, e.g. do you do volunteer work that is satisfying, do you have a hobby, etc.). The goal of the exercise is to tease out a skill set beyond the obvious one you associate with your immediate project. See below for the detailed exercise.

1. List every major activity.
Examples: teach a course, conduct research, train and mentor students, lead a small group or lab, serve on a university or student committee, volunteer for community
2. List the specific tasks associated with each activity.
Examples: draft syllabus, conduct office hours, grade exams
3. List the skills developed through each task.
Examples: writing, time management, critical thinking