

Psychology programs and course instructors should clearly connect course assignments and experiences to specific skills.

Skill metacognition

- Course assignments that include skill inventories related to the course or the psychology major as a whole can ask students to both reflect on their own skill levels as well as experiences that have helped them develop those skills. [See Kruger & Zechmeister, 2001, for examples of skills inventories.]

Skill alignment mapping with course and assignment objectives

- Many course syllabi already include course objectives, and perhaps department / program objectives. Instructors could also state how course assignments map on to achieving these objectives.
- Assignment descriptions could include a clear statement of the skills that assignment is meant to develop, to explicitly make the connection for students. [See Martini, Rail, and Norton, 2015, for examples.]
- Grading rubrics could use specific skill-related words and items to show students how their work shows the development of different skills.

Career information embedded in courses

- Departments could develop courses related to career exploration in psychology.
- “Careers in Psychology” courses should include information on the skills developed in the psychology major, and ask students to identify how their other courses have developed skills.
- Modules on psychology careers could be embedded into a range of courses, such as Intro to Psych, Research Methods, and/or capstone experiences to reinforce the importance of thinking about career goals and introduce students to developmentally-appropriate resources. [See Ciarocco et al., 2016, for an example.]

Promote resources for resume and interviewing help

- Work with college career offices, if available, to present in classes and share resources with students.
- Include assignments to engage with the career office [i.e., review a resume or practice interviewing] or attend university career-related events.
- Compile and share career resources via a central department site [such as O*NET or the APA career information and data tools].

REFERENCES AND CAREER RESOURCES

- Ciarocco, N. J., Dinella, L. M., Hatchard, C. J., & Valosin, J. (2016). Integrating professional development across the curriculum: An effectiveness study. *Teaching of Psychology, 43* (2), 91-98.
- Kruger, D. J. & Zechmeister, E. B. (2001). A skills-experience inventory for the undergraduate psychology major. *Teaching of Psychology, 28* (4), 249-253.
- Martini, T. S., Rail, A., & Norton, C. (2015). Psychology students’ understanding of the skill-based learning fostered through university assignments. *Teaching of Psychology, 42* (4), 335-338.
- Naufel, K. Z., Appleby, D. C., Young, J., Van Kirk, J. F., Spencer, S. M., Rudmann, J., ...Richmond, A. S. (2018). *The skillful psychology student: Prepared for success in the 21st century workplace*. Retrieved from: <https://www.apa.org/careers/resources/guides/transferable-skills.pdf>
- Career links and resources compiled by the American Psychological Association: <https://www.apa.org/careers>
- Psi Chi compilation of career-focused articles: *An Eye on the Workplace: Achieving a Career with a Bachelor’s Degree in Psychology* (2020). Available here: <https://store.psichi.org/an-eye-on-the-workplace-achieving-a-career-with-a-bachelors-in-psychology>

Supporting the Career Success of Psychology Majors

Emily Stark & Louisa Hall

Minnesota State University, Mankato

BACKGROUND AND CURRENT STUDY

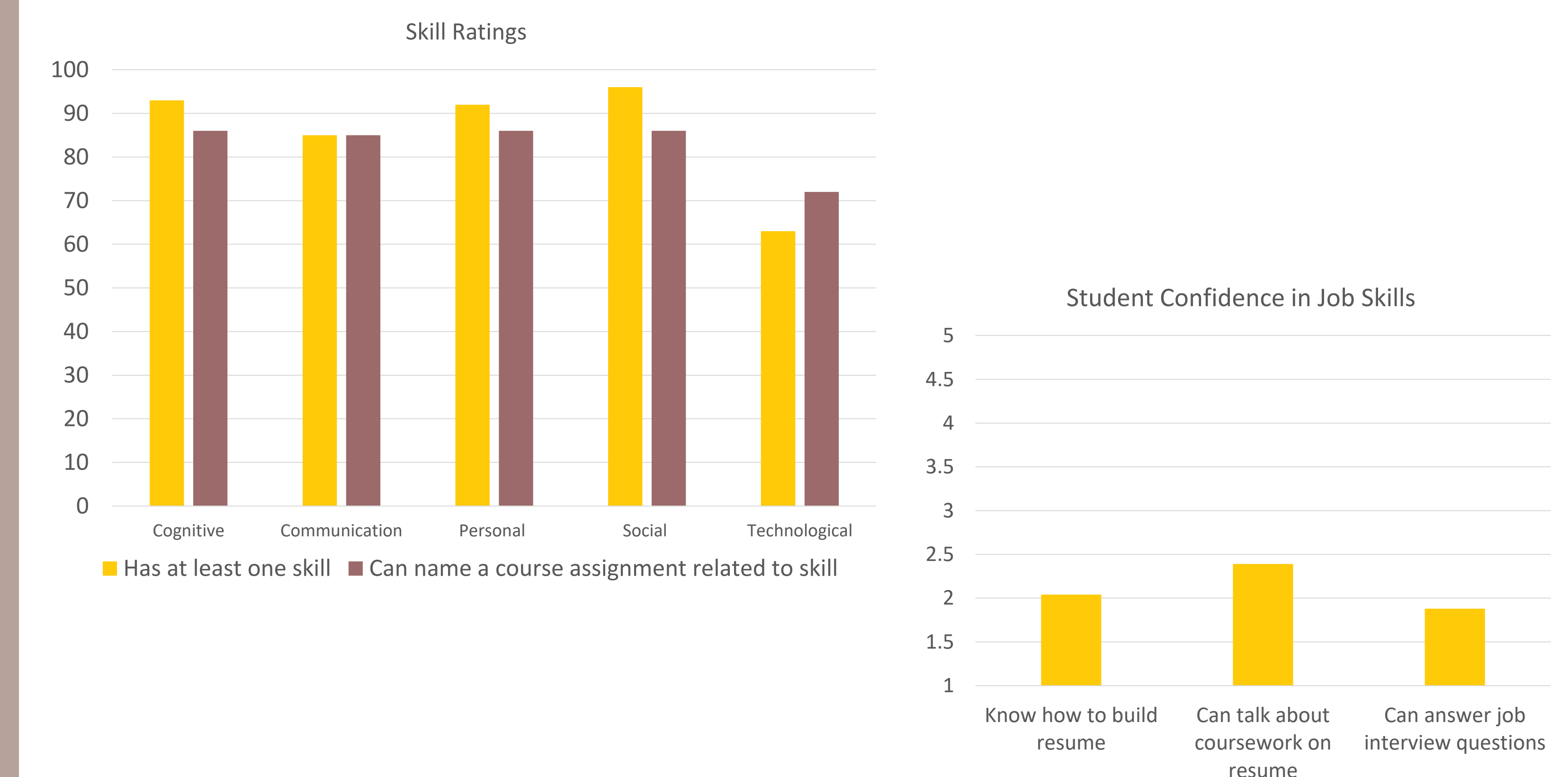
Psychology majors have the opportunity to develop a range of workplace skills, but are students able to identify their course experiences as evidence of these skills? While there are a wide range of jobs that are suited for psychology majors, if students do not understand the skills that they have developed in their courses or cannot apply those skills to different workplace settings and tasks, they may not be successful at finding a job or career that meets their interests and needs.

In this study, current students completed an online survey including self-ratings of skills related to a psychology major (Naufel et al., 2018), whether they could identify a course assignment related to those skills, and their confidence in preparing resume and interview materials.

Participants

- 72 current undergraduate students
- 25% male, 84% Caucasian/White
- 30% first-year and sophomore students, 70% junior and senior students

RESULTS and DISCUSSION



- Participants showed a high level of confidence in their skills, but were generally less able to identify a particular course assignment related to their skills.
- Participants showed less confidence in knowing how to talk about their courses on their resume or in preparation for job interviews.
- This poster shares a range of suggestions for more clearly communicating with students how their course assignments align with job-relevant skills.
- Data collection is on-going to better understand the specific career questions of students at different points in college, and to compare students planning on graduate school to those who do not intend to continue directly into a graduate program.