



HOME STUDY



Certificate in Training Needs Analysis

ITOL
INSTITUTE OF TRAINING &
OCCUPATIONAL LEARNING

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Using the *Programme* to develop yourself at work

A feature of this *Programme* is that it aims to increase your skills in the workplace. Thus while many of the Activities are designed to help you think more generally about the issues raised in the Module, others encourage you to relate those issues to your work, for example:

- by obtaining information about how things are done in your workplace;
- by carrying out particular projects;
- by talking to your manager and other colleagues.

These are called Workplace Activities and they should help you to improve your job performance generally by getting you to think about what you do in relation to what you are learning. We suggest that you may find it useful, as you work through the Module, to keep a working file for information or materials created as a result of Workplace Activities. Some of this work may be useful as supporting evidence for when you are assembling a Portfolio of Evidence for assessment.

It may be that you are not interested in evidence keeping, even so, you may still find it useful to look at and work through the Workplace Activities, just to see how the issues you are reading about relate to your job.

What if I'm not currently employed in training?

As we stated initially, the aim of this *Programme* is to help you function more effectively as a trainer whether you work full-time in training or whether your training activities are just a small part of your job. But it may be that you are currently employed in a totally different field, or are not employed at all, and are looking to use this *Programme* to help you get into training. In which case, you can do one of two things:

- you can ignore the Workplace Activities and concentrate on acquiring the basic knowledge given by the text and by the other Activities, etc.;
- you can apply the Workplace Activities to other situations, such as experience you have gained in previous jobs, in your leisure activities, or through voluntary work.

INTRODUCTION TO THIS MODULE

The whole world is changing rapidly. For organisations this means that they have to respond to new markets, new methods and new systems. In the 1970s it used to take a car manufacturer five years to get a new design from the drawing board to the car showroom. The design, with minor modifications, might then sell for ten years or more. In the 1990s, a new design will be turned into a real vehicle in less than a year and might sell for only two or three years before being substantially redesigned.

The individuals employed by organisations have to respond to these new ways of working by learning new skills, adopting flexible approaches and preparing for role changes in the future. In the past the training department might have obtained agreement and finance for a broad-based training course for all the employees in a particular group, supervisors for example, who would have gone away for a couple of days' training. For some, with only a few months in the job, it was useful; for others, the more experienced people, it was a waste of time because it didn't meet their specific needs.

Today, to be really effective, training has to be designed to meet the specific learning needs that the trainer has identified.

Rapid change has also affected the training area. As organisations change their objectives in response to changing circumstances, eg. a recession or a takeover, employees change their methods and trainers have to act flexibly to anticipate and respond to the changes.

In this Module we focus on the importance of identifying the learning needs of both individuals and groups in the planning and design of training events. The Module will help you to relate the specific learning needs of each individual and the shared needs of the groups for whom you have responsibility to the organisation's needs.

In this Module we will:

- describe a range of approaches and techniques to enable you to identify learning needs;
- describe how these techniques can be applied to individuals and groups;
- explain how these approaches and techniques can be related to the needs of the organisation.

Objectives

When you have worked through this Module you will be better able to:

- define the competence individuals and groups need to have in order to do their jobs;
- help individuals to identify their own current area and level of competence;
- help others to identify the current competence of individuals and groups;
- identify and agree on the learning requirements people need:
 - to meet the performance requirements of their current jobs;
 - to handle changes in performance requirements and work roles;
 - to help them fulfil their long-term aspirations;
- determine priorities between learning requirements.

PART 1
APPROACHES TO IDENTIFYING LEARNING NEEDS

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INTRODUCTION

In this Part of the Module we set the context for the identification of learning needs by answering the following two questions:

- Why do learning needs arise?
- Who has these needs?

The changes which take place, both inside and outside an organisation, also bring about changes in the knowledge and skills needed to perform particular tasks or jobs. These changes can affect individuals, groups or workers and even the entire organisation.

Organisations used to set work standards, and the standard required was called the 'experienced worker standard'. This was the standard to which all apprentices and trainees aspired. Nowadays, traditional work standards are being overtaken by competence-based standards.

To clarify the learning needed to do a job you must have analysed the job to identify the competence, or skills and knowledge, needed to carry out specific tasks. We look at the developments taking place in this type of analysis and show how competence-based standards relate to the areas of activity and the level of performance required.

We also look at performance standards which are being set by employers' organisations, usually in relation to National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ) or Management Charter Initiative (MCI) requirements.

When you have completed this Part of the Module you should be better able to:

- explain the link between changes at work and the learning needs of particular jobs;
- define competence and explain how it can be used as a basis for setting performance standards;
- devise or adapt performance standards to meet the needs of employees in your workplace.

1.1 THE CONTEXT

In the Introduction to the Module we highlighted the impact of **rapid change**. You might have asked yourself: 'How does rapid change affect learning needs and the way in which I identify these needs?'

The answer is that learning needs arise for a variety of reasons; the reasons can affect the way in which needs are identified. Reasons for learning needs might include, for example:

- a new employee joining a work group – an adult would need induction to the company and training in job skills, but if the employee came straight from school there would be many other learning needs to be met;
- new equipment being introduced – this might be a computer network in an office, or an automated material cutter or welder in a workshop;
- a worker not meeting production quality standards – this might be the result of higher standards being set and could be shown by excessive waste or too high a reject rate;

- a finance department in a local authority being required to prepare 25 per cent of its activity for private tender or 'market testing' – this might entail converting the accounts to business formats;
- an electrician needing to service the solid-state machine controllers which have replaced the electromechanical devices previous used – the electrician no longer works alongside a mechanic and has to solve a wider range of problems alone;
- a sales training manager transferring to a district sales manager's job – the new job involves meeting a completely different set of financial and sales targets;
- a district manager being promoted to regional manager – this might involve a shift from operational to strategic planning.

You can see from this list of reasons that there might be a wide range of learning implications for the employees in the workplace.

ACTIVITY 1

For each of the situations on the previous page give one example of the sort of learning need which might arise.

A new employee

New equipment

Worker not meeting quality standards

Finance department involved in market testing

An electrician needing to service new controllers

A sales training manager transferring to a district sales manager's job

A district manager being promoted to regional manager

The needs you have listed might include examples such as the following:

- A school leaver joining the department will need to learn about the world of work.
- A new computer network would mean that all the staff in an office would need to be updated in the particular skills required. This might be quite soon after they had all been updated on word processing, spreadsheet and presentation packages, so they might be a little tired of being trained every few weeks.
- The worker failing to meet standards might be using much faster or more sophisticated machinery than he or she had originally been trained to use. He or she might be intimidated by the new equipment so practical training in the use of the new equipment would probably be required.
- The finance department staff might need training in producing balance sheets and profit and loss accounts.
- The fully qualified electrician, overtaken by technological developments, could be worrying about a lack of mechanical knowledge.
- The training manager moving to a sales manager's job would probably soon become aware of a wide range of individual learning needs, eg. planning sales activities over a month and managing time effectively.
- The regional manager might find the change to strategic planning means becoming competent in the use of unfamiliar forecasting techniques.

You will have noticed that some of the changes affect individuals, eg. the school leaver, while others create needs for all the employees working in the area, eg. the introduction of new office equipment.

Another way of looking at who has learning needs is to use a diagram to link the types of change we have outlined to the people they might affect.

If you look at the causes of the learning need you will see that a single cause can affect more than just a single individual. From the example in the grid on the next page, you can see that when a young person starts his or her first job it can affect individuals, groups and the whole organisation.

What caused the learning need?	Who has the learning need?		
	An individual	A group	The organisation
Job changes arising from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - technology - methods - systems - products - services - organisational or management style - legal needs 			
Changes in personnel arising from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a young person starting his or her first job - adults starting - transfers or promotions - career development - personal development 	<i>A 16-year-old NVQ trainee needs training in office skills</i>	<i>Colleagues in the work group who coach the trainee need to know about NVQs</i>	<i>The training function needs to set up the management system for NVQ assessors and verifiers</i>
Performance deficiencies arising from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - technical skills - people skills - managerial skills 			

Thus what appears at first to be a need for an individual soon reveals other needs in the organisation.

◇ Gerry picked up his lunch tray and walked towards the table in the corner used most days by the four supervisors. After ten years as a joiner with ReproFurn in High Wycombe he had been promoted to supervisor and he was worried. After two months everything seemed to be going wrong; there were quality problems, timekeeping was getting worse and he had just had a bad-tempered argument with one of the people he had worked well with before he took the new job.

Beryl was already at the table. She had plenty of experience so Gerry thought she might be able to offer him some advice. She always oozed confidence and was highly regarded. In fact, she was moving on to a middle management job in distribution the following week.

After discussing his own worries for a few minutes, Gerry was most surprised when she said, 'Anyway, you think you've got problems. How do you think I feel? I'm leaving a nice secure position, changing departments and taking more responsibility. I'll be using the Routemaster package on the computer, which I've only seen for five minutes, and my report writing's not very good.'

They were joined by James and Dipak. James was really morose. He put a final written warning on the table for them all to see. He had been on a five-day supervisor's course but was still failing to meet the performance standards set for him. He spent a lot of time with each of his machinists, ironing out all their difficulties, and couldn't understand why the shift superintendent kept telling him to deal with the flow of work and let the machinists sort out their individual problems for themselves.

Dipak, on the other hand, was thriving. He had transferred from a similar job in quality assurance and was enjoying the challenge of moving from a fairly remote technical area to a practical area. He was good at scheduling all the raw materials for the machines but in the back of his mind was a slight feeling that he needed to develop his interpersonal and communication skills. For the moment, he was waiting to see how things panned out.

ACTIVITY 2

From the Cameo above, suggest one learning need which each supervisor might have.

Suggest also one learning need which might apply to them all.

Learning need

Gerry

Beryl

James

Dipak

All

You might have identified the following learning needs:

- **Gerry** – a need for counselling in handling the role of leading a group of which he was formerly a member;
- **Beryl** – a need for computer training in the use of Routemaster, and a need for training in report writing;
- **James** – a need for a review of his working practices in order to identify the reasons for his failure to achieve the performance standard, and coaching by an experienced supervisor in prioritising work and scheduling tasks;
- **Dipak** – a need to review the ways in which he deals with people;
- **All** – a need to review communication skills, which might reveal a learning need common to all members of the group. The need might be to improve:
 - oral skills, eg. giving clear instructions;
 - aural skills, eg. listening to and noting staff's concerns;
 - written skills, eg. presenting information on paper to senior managers.

Learning needs, then, usually result from changes in methods, roles or performance, which mean that individual employees have to meet new and different performance standards, ie. the standard to which the employer requires a job or task to be performed. Sometimes the changes affect the whole group and occasionally an entire organisation.

SELF CHECK 1

Before moving on, check your understanding of what you have learned by answering the following questions. You will find solutions to Self Checks at the back of the book.

Give one example of a learning need that would arise in the following circumstances.

1. A change in technology that would apply only to an individual.
2. A change in technology that would apply to a work group.
3. A change of role that would apply only to an individual.
4. A change in performance required that would apply to a work group.

As we have seen, learning needs arise when people join the organisation or when changes take place inside or outside the organisation, eg. reorganisation within a department or a new market opportunity to exploit. The next problem is how to specify the learning need and the standard to which the learning has to be directed.

1.2 TRADITIONAL WORK STANDARDS

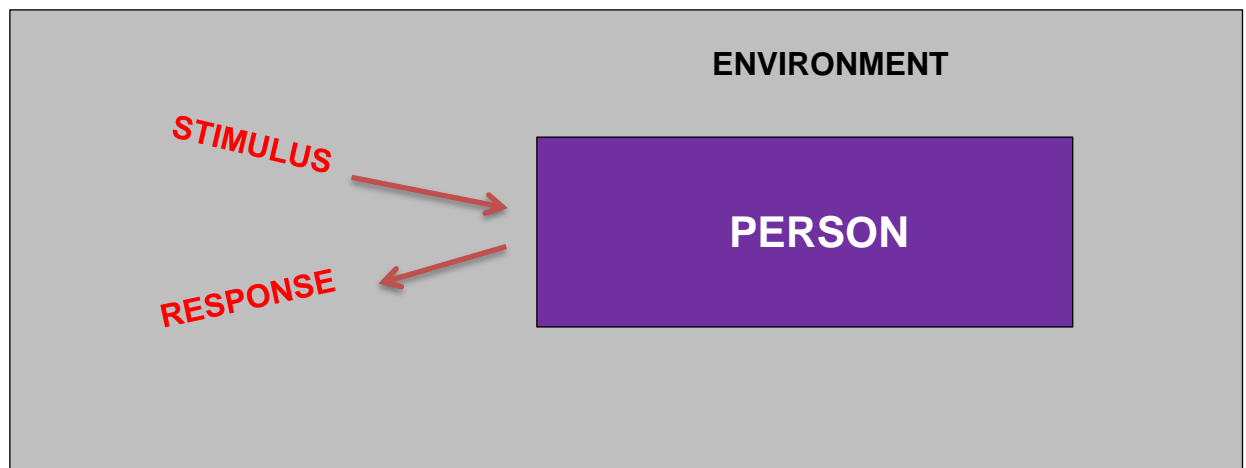
In the introduction to this Part we mentioned that the traditional way of setting day-to-day performance standards was to identify the 'experienced worker standard' (EWS), ie. the standard that would be achieved by an experienced worker.

The starting point with EWS is the tasks within a job. You can break every job down into areas of responsibility and each area consists of a number of tasks. Each task has a definable beginning and end, and a desired outcome. We look at this in more detail in Part 2.

Two other factors you need to take into account are:

- the environment in which the task is performed;
- the person who performs the task.

The environment is the situation within which the person performs the task. As the diagram below shows, each task begins with a stimulus received from a point in the environment and ends with a response sent to a point, not necessarily the same one, in the environment.



Some examples of the stimulus, the response and the task itself are given below:

Stimulus	Response	Task
The telephone in the reception office rings	so the receptionist picks it up, answers	and puts the call through to the extension required
The fax machine in the service department prints an incoming service request	so the engineer on call picks up the request, determines the need	and passes it on via the mobile phone to an engineer in the field
The next TV set on the production line reaches a worker's station	so the technician checks the connections for the main board	and installs it on the mounting plate behind the screen
A customer walks into the sportswear department	so the sales assistant gets up from a desk	and asks the customer what type of garment is required
The kettle boils	so the person making the tea pours the water into the pot	and serves afternoon tea to colleagues
The automatic fire klaxon in the coffee roasting hall sounds	so the ovens supervisor hits the red button to cut the power, presses the evacuation alarm for the rest of the building	and calls the fire brigade.

You can see that each of the environments is specially designed to enable the worker to receive the stimulus.

- When a call arrives on a modern PBX telephone exchange, a light flashes and a gentle beep might sound, just enough stimulus to alert a receptionist but not so much that it disturbs others working in the area.
- Similarly, a fax machine might quietly signal an incoming message or just leave the printout to be picked up.
- On the production line the TV set arrives and waits, no other information being necessary.
- The sales desk is located near, but not too close to, the department entrance so that each customer's arrival will be noticed.
- In the kitchen the kettle boils and cuts out.
- In the coffee roasting hall a fire klaxon sounds loudly enough to clear the immediate area of all personnel within seconds.

A stimulus might go unnoticed, of course. An urgent fax message might sit on the machine right through a lunch break and a tea maker might put the kettle on, be called away for another office task and forget about the thirsty colleagues at their desks. The TV technician might be sidetracked at a critical moment and forget to tighten up the earthing strap on the board.

Environments should also be designed so that the worker can proceed with the task. Everything needed for the response should be available:

- the PBX connected to all handsets;
- the fax machine next to a phone line, outgoing only to keep the line clear for urgent calls;
- the TV assembly station with all boards and screws to hand;
- the salesperson trained to welcome every potential customer to the department with a friendly, helpful enquiry;
- teabags in the caddy;
- emergency personnel and equipment in a fireproofed office.

Many disputes about performance arise because workers claim that parts were not available or the relevant machine was not working, or not working properly. However, when the conditions within which a worker has to perform a task are specified and present, you can make a judgement about the standard of performance of the task. When the specified conditions are present and the standard is not met, you can identify a training or learning need.

If a TV set has a faulty earth, the failure might be traced to a particular worker and the reason identified, eg. fatigue, noise or a learning need. An ovens supervisor might cancel the klaxon because there is no sign of a fire, unaware that coffee dust and too high a temperature in an oven has created ideal conditions for a flash fire – indicating the need for more experience and training. A flashing light on the PBX might be left for more than a minute or answered unprofessionally, indicating the need for a second receptionist, more training or higher standards.

When the conditions are right for the task you can set the EWS, the performance standard that you would expect from an experienced worker. The standards can be quite detailed, as in the following examples:

- the TV board to be correctly aligned in the slots, the edge connectors correctly inserted into the terminals, the two locking screws, inserted and tightened to the specified torque setting and circuits 779 and 347 tested: time – 30 seconds;
- an incoming call to be picked up before the third ring on average, the formal company response given and the call passed on within ten seconds.

For the first example, the quality control system should pick up whether the technician has done the task correctly and the timesheets should show whether he or she has met the time allowance. For the second example, you could specify the wording of the company response and employ anonymous shoppers to telephone the company and test the system.

WORKPLACE ACTIVITY 1

List five jobs from your experience at work, some of which you have done yourself and some of which you are responsible for as a manager. Identify one task from each job and write an EWS for it. You should include the relevant aspects of the environment and the criteria.

Use a grid similar to the one below for your answer, but write your answer on a separate sheet of paper.

Job	Task	EWS performance standard
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

The following Cameo illustrates how Joe Martin, the ReproFurn training manager, identified a task to EWS in the maintenance department.

◇ *Joe Martin called in to see Lawrie Barnes, the maintenance manager at ReproFurn, about the complaints that phone calls for maintenance were being left unanswered. He asked Stella, Lawrie's secretary, how people requested service.*

'If it's not urgent they fill in a chit describing the problem. If it's urgent they ring up. I take all the requests and write them in a book,' replied Stella confidently. She added that Lawrie sometimes took calls and admitted that occasionally the office was empty.

When Joe asked her why the requests were written in a book when Stella had a PC on a desk, Lawrie butted in. 'The lads can write their actions in the other columns when the job's done,' he said.

After looking at the book in Stella's office, Joe left. He was back in Lawrie's office the next day with the chirpy look on his face that he always had when he thought he was

on to something interesting. When he emerged, Stella presented to be defensive. 'All right, Joe, what have you got up your sleeve?' 'Software and a sound card,' he replied. 'Here's a package that sits on your computer and behaves like an answerphone. When a call comes in the software records the message, along with the time and date. You can then type it up and print it on a job request form for the engineers. You can scrap all the chits and you don't need to answer the calls on that line. They all come to the PC so you have a record. Between us we can then write a task spec. to show other people exactly how you handle the task. Here's my first draft. What do you think?'

The paper he gave her said:

Job	<i>Maintenance Department Secretary</i>		
Task	<i>Handle incoming requests for service and maintenance</i>		
EWS	Stimulus	Response	Task
	<i>A message is received and flagged up on the PC</i>	<i>so the secretary listens to the message on returning to the PC</i>	<i>and types it on a job request form and passes it to an engineer within 30 minutes for a standard call-out and within 5 minutes if it is urgent.</i>

'That looks pretty watertight,' responded Stella. 'I suppose your next trick is to get software to read the message, print the form automatically and cut me out of a job!' Joe opened his palms, raised his shoulders and smiled enigmatically.

In this section we have outlined the way in which jobs and standards used to be defined. With the improvement in task analysis techniques, there is now a wider range of approaches available. These include the concept of competence, which is the subject to which we now turn.

1.3 COMPETENCE-BASED STANDARDS

In the Cameo in Section 1.1, all four supervisors at ReproFurn expressed concern about their ability to do their jobs. They were not very clear about what they were doing well or badly. But when you, as a trainer or line manager, make judgments about people's performance, you need specific definitions of performance standards. Only then will you be able to assess whether people are performing to the standard or not.

Since 1981 a great deal of work has been carried out in the UK to establish a national system of performance standards in all occupations. The importance was recognised by the government in the White Paper *Employment for the 1990s*, which stated:

'Qualifications and high standards are not luxuries – they are necessities central to securing a competent and adaptable workforce. Economic performance and individual job satisfaction both depend on maintaining and improving standards of performance.'

In commerce and industry a standard is a precise definition of the standard to which a product or service is to be made or delivered. You may have experience of using standards such as those kite-marked by the British Standards Institute, perhaps the quality standard BS 5750. Or ISO 9000

In employment a competent worker is one who has achieved a specific performance standard. 'Competence' has been defined as 'the ability to perform the activities within an occupational area to the levels of performance expected in employment'. Therefore a performance standard:

- is a precise definition of what a worker needs to be able to do;
- describes the standard needed in the modern workplace;
- is established by the relevant industry;
- indicates the skills needed for the satisfactory achievement of the standard;
- is an element in a qualification which tells an employer that the holder can perform a task to the standard;
- clarifies the training needed to ensure that the person can meet the standard.

Throughout the world of employment, performance standards are gradually being developed. The structure of these standards at each level is very similar. They locate the purpose of the job in the organisation and then focus down through a series of steps to specify the performance of each aspect of the job. In the chart below you can see the type of framework in normal use. This particular example relates to the correspondence a Social Services Department community group organiser needs to produce as part of the process of liaison with members of the community.

Item	Description	Example
The key purpose	The main outcome of the whole job	Community group organiser
The key area	The area of work in which the job takes place	Manage organisation activities
The key role	The main function of the job within the area	Liaison with community
Unit of performance	The particular aspect of the job being carried out	Administration
Element of competence	The specific activity or task being assessed	Compose correspondence on behalf of the organisation
Performance criteria	The features of satisfactory performance of the activity	The style and language used are appropriate to the purpose of the correspondence and the target group
Range indicators	The detailed circumstances within which the activity is performed	Formal memoranda and letters; letter writing; aims of the organisation; sources of information
Evidence	The information used by an assessor to determine whether the criteria have been met	Examples showing consideration of cultural, linguistic and literacy needs of addressee

ACTIVITY 3

Take as an example the routine task of photocopying done by an office junior as part of his or her job.

Using the structure of a performance standard described earlier, write a performance standard for the task. You should:

- describe the task as the element of competence;
- identify the performance criteria;
- give the range indicators;
- indicate the kind of evidence an assessor might use to determine whether the criteria have been met.

Use a separate sheet of paper for your answer.

Your performance standard should be along these lines.

- **Element of competence:** make photocopies of existing documents.
- **Performance criteria:** operate the photocopier in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and office procedures.
- **Range indicators:** office documentation up to A3 in size of original and from A3 to A5 in size of copy.
- **Evidence:** samples of copies made, adjustments made for improvement of poor originals.

You might also have specified time and quantity as well as quality. You may be able to find an NVQ standard with which you can compare your result.