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Training Needs Assessment

International Facilitator's Companion

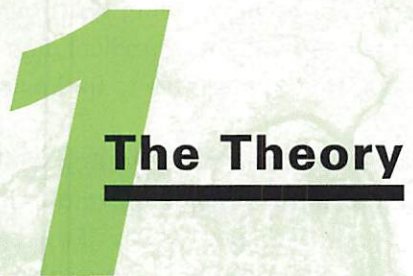
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imaginal training

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1 The Theory

Section One: The Theory

What is Training Needs Assessment?

Training needs assessment is a problem analysis. It identifies what is wrong with staff or management performance and points to the kind of solution that is needed. Like a medical diagnosis, it does not guarantee a solution but without it, attempts to find a cure are at best guesses.

Training can be seen as a cycle starting with training needs assessment, and moving to program design, development, implementation and evaluation. Each of the five phases of the cycle mutually overlap. For example, design changes may be made while delivering a course (the implementation phase).

The training cycle begins with an assessment of training needs for the potential participants. Assessment of training needs is discerning the gap between optimal and actual performance, determining if training will close the gap, and, if training is considered to be a tool to improve performance, setting training goals.

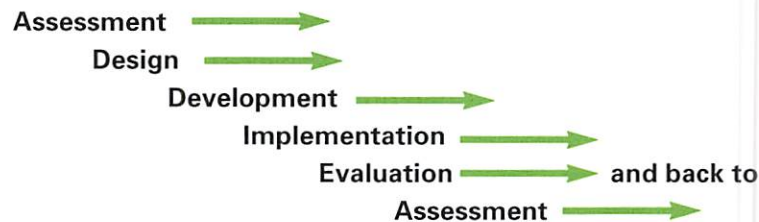
Next the specific training program is designed. Program design is determining the structure of the program, topics, rational objectives, existential aims, methods and tools. The length of the program is determined, what modules will be taught, their length and sequence, and what sessions will be included in each of the modules.

The program is then developed. Developing a program is essentially writing the faculty manual, participant's workbook (if one is used) and preparing teaching materials such as hand outs, overhead sheets, and other teaching aids. A good last step in this process is to do a dry run of the program. This often results in improvements especially if a team does the development.

The program is then implemented. The actual training is given.

The program is then evaluated. Programs can be evaluated from several perspectives. Did the behavior of the participants change in the desired way? Does the company or department perform better? Were the participants and the course sponsors satisfied with the training?

The Training Cycle



These phases in training are overlapping. In the processes of developing the program may need to be redesigned or while implementing the program it may need to be changed. While each phase is to be completed as much as possible, refinements to earlier stages often happen.

Training Needs Assessment is diagnosing the performance of employees. It answers the question, what are performance problems of the company or department?

The Methods of Needs Assessment

There are several methods for determining the optimal and actual performance. Four are described here: Existent Data Analysis (EDA), Needs Assessment (NA), Subject Matter Analysis (SMA), Task Analysis (TA) and Needs Assessment Workshop (NAW).

Existent Data Analysis (EDA) is the process of inferring from the results of employee performance what that performance is. For example, the monthly sales figures of an employee can be used to deduce what kind of performance that sales person is doing. EDA provides a picture of the effectiveness of an employee but does not say why he or she is effective. Existent Data includes contracts, sales reports, accident reports, call-backs for non-repair, letters to management, attendance figures, or exit interviews. In fact, any existing data that might provide information about actual employee performance may be used. EDA is one technique to indicate where actual skills, knowledge and attitudes need improvement but further analysis needs to be done. EDA cannot be used for determining optimal performance.

Needs Assessment (NA) is the process of seeking opinions about optimal and actual performance, feelings, causes and solutions. For example, supervisors, operators and customers are interviewed about how the operators are using a new computerized telephone system. NA can be used for analyzing actual but not optimal performance. NA can be done by having questionnaires answered by employees, their peers, supervisors, management and customers. Interviews are also useful for NA.

Subject Matter Analysis (SMA) is the process of clarifying the nature of the knowledge which employees need to possess to do their jobs effectively. For example, it is the facts, concepts and principles in the mind of a physician that allows him to diagnose a patient. This information is found by interviewing experts and reading relevant material. This is one technique for analyzing optimal but not actual performance.

Task Analysis (TA) is the process of documenting the actual performance of an expert performing his/her job. For example, the best telephone repairman would be observed repairing a phone switchboard. These observations would then be the basis of defining the knowledge, skills

and attitudes required of a repairman. This is one technique for analyzing optimal but not actual skills.

The Needs Assessment Workshop (NAW) is a group process for doing actual and optimal performance analysis and can develop understanding of causes and create solutions. The NAW can bring together various interests: supervisors, managers, peers, employees, and clients to determine optimal and actual performance. This is most effective if done on a small scale: small business, or departments within larger business.

A fifth method for determining actual performance is direct observations. This requires that the observer has a clear understanding of what behavior is expected.

The assessment process involves defining skills, knowledge and attitudes. Skills are what an employee can *do*, for example, a secretary may need to type 100 words per minute. They are tasks or processes that can be done. Knowledge is *understanding* something, for example, a trainer knows the training cycle. Both skills and knowledge can easily be tested. Attitudes are what people *believe*. A driver may be confident in heavy traffic or a manager may be convinced that his employees are resistant to change. Attitudes are difficult to measure. Attitudes are often unconscious and difficult to deal with.

The process of assessing the training needs begins with determining the optimal skills, knowledge and attitudes required of the employee. This is often done in large and medium sized companies by creating job descriptions and specifications for each position in the context of organizational goals and labor supply forecasts. Job descriptions then allow setting performance objectives for each employee or type of employee. Then the optimal skill, knowledge and attitude requirements can be determined.

In many countries there are standards of optimal skill, knowledge and attitude for the small business sector determined by government agencies, business organizations or educational institutes. Professional associations like law and medicine have their own standards to which members must conform. In any case, the optimal situation must be determined. This is not the maximum possible but what can be realistically expected.

The second step is to determine the actual skills, knowledge and attitudes of employees. The skills, knowledge and attitude of present employees can be determined in a variety of ways but they are only relevant in relation to the optimal performance expectations. The skills of an employee can be manual, technological or social in nature. The knowledge of an employee can be general, field of expertise, or methodological. The attitude of an employee can be about his/her own capacity, social and work environment or even ultimate concerns.

The third step is to determine performance discrepancies. Determining performance discrepancies is determining the gap between optimal and actual skills, knowledge and attitude. Determining if the gap actually can result in a real and important performance discrepancy is next. A specific secretary may 'need to type' and the optimal typing level is 80 words per minute and she only types 50. But if she only types once per week this gap has little meaning in her overall performance. Next is determining if the gap is wide enough to be significant. The optimal typing speed may be 80 wpm and a typist types an average of 78 wpm in every test. This gap may not be significant enough to warrant intervention. A significant, relevant gap between optimal and actual skills, knowledge and attitude is the definition of performance discrepancy.

The fourth step is to do the complete needs analysis. Underlying causes are determined. These causes may not have anything to do with employee knowledge, skills or attitudes. Potential solutions are articulated. The vast majority of solutions will be non-training solutions.

Not all problems require training or are even helped by training. Company policies may be the source of the problem. Interns in hospital may be required to work 24 hour shifts which work well in normal work loads during which the doctors can take naps during slack time. But during periods of heavy work loads this can result in exhaustion which leads to mistakes.

The work process or procedures may be at fault. Clients may see several departments from the same company: sales, after-sales service, training, and delivery. If these departments do not have much internal contact with each other, the client may find the company difficult to deal with resulting in low resale rates. A secretary working for several managers may be expected to set his own priorities without guidelines from the company. The most insistent manager succeeds in getting the most work out of the secretary and the other managers find their work neglected.

The tools for the job may not be appropriate. Machining equipment in one machine tool company was always bought second hand to save money. It required a great deal of skill and time to produce products with tolerances tight enough for customers. Productivity was quite low.

In some cases people do not fit their jobs and new assignments are required. The head of human resources of a large multinational company had contributed a great deal to the development of the company in a number of functions but he was doing very poorly in his present job. When moved to head of finance he flourished.

If training is called for, then specific learning objectives are set.



2

The Process

Section Two: The Process

The Assessment process

The following is one way of doing the assessment process in a workshop. It assumes that a category of employee will be assessed and not individual employees.

Optimal:	
Knowledge	
Skills	
Attitudes	

The process of assessing the training needs begins with determining the **optimal knowledge, skills and attitudes** required of the employee. This is based on the strategic needs of the company. Determine the Critical Success Factors of the Company. Determine the functional jobs of a category of employees. Rank the jobs in relation to the success factors. Determine the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes for each success factor and each job. Define these as the optimal level (i.e. the highest possible level sustainable) within the context of the company and its goals.

Actual:	
Knowledge	
Skills	
Attitudes	

The second step is to determine the **actual knowledge, skills and attitudes** of employees. Determine which of the knowledge, skills and attitudes are closest to optimal in the category of employees. Determine which are weakest in the group. Individually rank each of the capacities (K,S,A) from 1 to 10. Tabulate the results. Mark where there is agreement. Where there is disagreement discuss why there is disagreement. If agreement can not be reached put the category in the middle. Prioritize as most important to achieve critical success factors for each of the weakest and those in the middle.

The third step is to determine **performance discrepancies**. Discuss why the most important of the knowledge, skills and attitudes are important for the company. Discuss why the least important are considered unimportant. For the middle capacities check this, because some people are competent and some not or are all middle level of competency.

Actual:

Knowledge

Skills

Attitudes

G
A
P**Optimal:**

Knowledge

Skills

Attitudes

Select the 5 most important priorities. For each of the priorities write a sentence describing the performance discrepancy. Read the sentences out loud and discuss. Make any changes necessary until there is agreement.

Underlying Causes**Potential Solutions****Learning Objectives**

Knowledge

Skills

Attitudes

The fourth step is to do the **complete needs analysis**. This involves three steps. The underlying causes are determined. For each of the performance discrepancies brainstorm possible causes using the following categories: policy, work processes, tools and equipment and inappropriate placement of employees. Potential solutions are articulated. The solutions may not be training. If appropriate, training objectives are set. Use the formula verb, verb, noun, requirement.
Example: To be able / to park / the car / between two other cars standing 6 metres from one another (this is a skill objective).



3

Examples

Training Needs Assessment Workshop One

Rational Objective: To determine clear and concrete optimal competencies in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes for an organization.

Existential Aim: To experience systematic thinking through what the optimal needs of an organization are.

Step	Procedure	Notes
Context	<i>Determining the training needs of workers is the first step in preparing a training program. Often we offer programs because we know something and try to sell it. The first step in this process is to answer the questions: 'What expertise do employees need? What do they need to be able to do?' and 'What are appropriate employee attitudes?' The next question is 'What is the existing capacity of employees?' Then the question is: 'What is actually the gap we experience in looking at what there is and what is required to do a good job?' The question you ask yourself now is: 'What is the underlying cause of the problem and what are potential solutions?' Finally, if training is appropriate, training objectives are set.</i>	
Movements	<i>1 We will spend four sessions doing a training needs analysis. We want to begin with core competencies and work functions. For the purposes of this exercise we will be using the KPN Management Skill Builder. Review the KPN Management Skill Builder.</i> <i>2 We will begin with the Management Skills Form. We are going to look at managers in your company. We could do any other group of employees. In other situations we would do a core competencies workshop with you.</i>	
Conclusion	See below	

Training Needs Assessment Workshop One

Rational Objective: See above

Existential Aim: see above

Step	Procedure	Notes
Context	See above	
Movements	3 Divide into teams. Go through the list of skills and ask, '<i>Are these key capacities for our company?</i>' Cross out any that are not. Add any that are not on this list. Write a sentence or two describing each of the competencies. <i>Are there any questions?</i> 4 Continue in your team and list the 10 key management jobs for the company. A Key Job should be listed as a content title and not a functional title. For example: ■ Answering Customer Questions not Customer Service Agent ■ Preparing Budget Projections not Financial Officer ■ Meeting Key Clients not Marketing Staff. 5 Use the Functions and Skills Chart. Put the skills down the side and functions across the top. Score each function from one to ten (one being the lowest and ten the highest) in its need for each of the management skills. Total the functions and the skills. 6 Select the five functions that have the highest score. We could select the ones with the lowest score or other criteria. The reason we are selecting these is that they should have the greatest impact on the success of the company.	
Conclusion	See below	

Training Needs Assessment Workshop One

Rational Objective: See above

Existential Aim: See above

Step	Procedure	Notes
Context	See above	
Movements	7 Next decide what knowledge, skill and/or attitude these jobs require to be effective. Fill in the Optimal Competencies Chart. For each of the selected functions put the Knowledge, Skills or Attitude needed for that function. ■ The knowledge of an employee can be scientific, technical, economic, political, social, humanities or methodological. ■ The Skills of an employee can be manual, technological or social in nature. ■ The attitude of an employees can be about his or her own integrity, social mores or ethics or ultimate concerns. 8 <i>Please put your Optimal Competencies Chart on a flip over and put it on the wall when you are done.</i> Plenary 1 <i>We will have each team report. What are the key competencies? Which are the five most important functions? And what are the knowledge skills and attitudes required by each of these functions?</i> 2 Listen to the reports.	Define these as the optimal level (i.e. the highest possible level sustainable) within the context of the company and its goals.
Conclusion	See below	

Training Needs Assessment Workshop One

Rational Objective: See above

Existential Aim: See above

Step	Procedure	Notes
Context	See above	
Movements	3 After each of the reports ask: ■ <i>Are there questions for clarity? Is there anything you don't understand?</i> ■ <i>Are there any capacities that you question?</i> ■ <i>Are there additional knowledge, skills or attitudes that should be added to any of the functions?</i>	
Conclusion	Reflection: 1 <i>What were the steps we went through?</i> 2 <i>Where was it interesting?</i> 3 <i>Where was it difficult?</i> 4 <i>What was useful?</i> 5 <i>How could we further refine the competencies?</i> <i>We now have an idea of what the company's competencies needs for certain key functions are.</i> Make announcements.	

Causes and Non-Training Solutions to Performance Discrepancies

Performance Problems

Performance problems are issues that arise in situations where employees should be able to cope. For example, an increasing number of requests for repairs of a particular telecom network.

- 1 The employees may **lack knowledge or skills**. This also includes prerequisite knowledge or skills such as reading levels or knowledge of an earlier version of a programming language.
- 2 There may be an **absence** of effective **incentives** or the incentives may be improper.
- 3 The **environment** may be blocking people from doing their job. This includes other personnel, corporate policies and procedures and tools being used by the employee.
- 4 **Motivation** may be low. That is the employee may not place high value in performing the way expected or may lack confidence in his or her ability to succeed.

New Systems and Technologies

New systems or technologies require operators or users to become familiar with how they work. These can be internal like new computers, production processes or organizational changes, or external like new government regulations or changes in customers, competitors or suppliers.

- 1 Changes in on the **job technology** like computers or production equipment may require that employees are trained.
- 2 Changes in the **organization** like right-sizing (becoming smaller) or layering (eliminating layers of management) may result in employees being retrained.
- 3 Changes in **law**, like new safety regulations may result in training.
- 4 Changes in the **marketplace** such as changes in customer tastes, new competition or changes in suppliers.

Causes and Non-Training Solutions to Performance Discrepancies

Non-Training Solutions to Performance Discrepancies

Work environment The environment in which work is done may need to be changed.

New Policies The policies of the organization may need to be changed.

Redesign work The way work is done may need to be redesigned.

Redesign tools The tools of work may need to be redesigned or new tools acquired.

New Assignments The worker may need to be put in a different position or replaced.

The Management Skill Builder

Functions of Management		Institutional Core Skills	Management Skills
Enterprising: Meeting the challenge of change	■ Corporate vision and strategy ■ Innovation based on measured risks	International Enterprising	Enterprising
		Enterprising in the Company	Internal Enterprising
Integrating: Finding a form of consensus among people	■ Inspiring people to reach corporate goals ■ Stability, team spirit and consensus about the company's direction	Working Together	Involving
		Success by People	Leading
Administrating: Administrating things effectively and efficiently	■ A good structure of the administrating ■ Rules for realizing freedom within limits ■ Control of quality and costs to make profits	Customer Oriented Organization	Organizing
		Quality and Price for Profit	Controlling
Producing: Customer driven effective performance and drive for results	■ Knowledge of customers and the market ■ Delivering value for money ■ Knowing what to do, how to do it and getting it done	Quality to Customers	Quality Management
		Full-Scale Services	Service Management

Management Skills

Management Skills	Descriptions of Skills for the target organization
Enterprising	
Internal Enterprising	
Involving	
Leading	
Organizing	
Controlling	
Quality Management	
Service Management	

Functions and Skills Chart

Functions Skills	One	Two	Three	Four	Five

	Six	Seven	Eight	Nine	Ten

Optimal Competencies Chart

Functions	Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

Training Needs Assessment Workshop Two

Rational Objective: To determine the actual knowledge, skills and attitudes of the selected company.

Existential Aim: To experience the power of determining the actual situation of a company without cynicism or over-optimism.

Step	Procedure	Notes
Context	1 This session we want to spend looking at the actual situation of the functions we worked on the last session. This is the second part of the training needs assessment process. 2 In order to do this we need to take a perspective. Turn to the client perspective form. Individually, at the top of the form, write the name of your company. Now list at least 5 weaknesses the company has. Next to each weakness write why are these weaknesses negative? Now list at least 5 strengths the company has. Next to each strength write why are these strengths positive?	
Movements	3 Reflection: One person tell us who your company is and what are its weaknesses? Repeat this for 3 or 4 people. Can anyone say why these are negative? Someone tell us the strengths of the company. Why are these strengths? Which were easier to think about? Why was it easier? What does this say about our relationship with the client? How can we have a more neutral stance?	
Conclusion	see below	

Training Needs Assessment Workshop Two

Rational Objective: See above

Existential Aim: See above

Step	Procedure	Notes
Context	See above	
Movements	1 The next step is to decide what the participants already know, what skills they currently have and what attitudes they have. Divide the group into the same teams as the last session. 2 Look at the Actual Competencies Chart - it is the same as the Optimal Competencies Chart except the title. We recognize that you don't have all the information at this point but you do know enough about the company. So try to fill in the Actual Knowledge, Skills or Attitudes boxes for each of the functions. Are there any questions? 3 When the teams are finished have them regather for the next step. 4 You will continue to work in teams. The next step is to describe the Performance Discrepancies of the Target Group. Look at both the Optimal and Actual Competencies Charts. Review each function. For each function where there is a definite performance discrepancy write a sentence or two describing it. It is possible to have more than one. You should include what is expected in the function and what the arena of the discrepancy is. Please put these sentences on a flipover with the name of the company and the name of the function.	
Conclusion	See below	

Training Needs Assessment Workshop Two

Rational Objective: See above

Existential Aim: See above

Step	Procedure	Notes
Context	See above	
Movements	Reports 1 <i>Would a representative from one of the teams report on their work, the functions and performance discrepancy sentences.</i> 2 At the end of each report: ■ <i>What is clear?</i> ■ <i>What is unclear?</i> ■ <i>Is there anything that should be added?</i> ■ <i>With these descriptions can you say what the underlying causes are? (Ask for examples.)</i> ■ <i>How can they be improved?</i> 3 Repeat for each report.	
Conclusion	Reflection 1 <i>We want to spend a few minutes reflecting - What was something new this session?</i> 2 <i>What were you reminded of?</i> 3 <i>What is the underlying work of this session?</i> 4 <i>What could you do to become better at this kind of analysis?</i>	

Actual Competencies Chart

Functions	Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

Training Needs Assessment Workshop Three

Rational Objective: To determine the underlying causes for performance discrepancies.

Existential Aim: To experience training as a part of a larger set of factors that improve an organization's performance.

Step	Procedure	Notes
Context	1 <i>In this session we want to look at the underlying causes for performance discrepancies. The assumption is that there are many factors that can cause performance problems in an organization. The set we are using should cover the major ones. They are company policy, work environment (doing work that requires a lot of concentration while in a busy room), work processes, work tools (not having a fax), job assignment (a personnel manager who is difficult to get along with) and training (not knowing, or able to do, or unmotivated by something).</i>	
Movements	1 <i>The next step is to describe the Performance Discrepancies of the Target Group.</i> 2 <i>We will return to teams to answer the question, 'What are the underlying causes?' You have a work sheet called 'Underlying Performance Discrepancies Causes'. Down the left side is where you put the performance discrepancies and across the top are arenas of causes: company policy, work environment, work processes, work tools, job assignment or training. If any of these are causes put in the box what it is. Please make these as specific as possible. Please put these on flip overs. Are there any questions?</i>	
Conclusion	See below	

Training Needs Assessment Workshop Three

Rational Objective: See above

Existential Aim: See above

Step	Procedure	Notes
Context	See above	
Movements	3 <i>Take the next hour to do this.</i> Reports 4 <i>Does anyone have a function that has only non-training solutions? If so could you report first? If all the teams have training solutions go to point 5. Please give the function, discrepancy and the causes.</i> ■ <i>Is there anything that you don't understand?</i> ■ <i>What is interesting about this report?</i> ■ <i>What do you find useful?</i> ■ <i>What would you add?</i> ■ <i>To the reporter: What would be an effective way of communicating your conclusions to the client?</i> 5 <i>Have each team report. Please give the function, discrepancy and the causes. After each report ask the following questions:</i> ■ <i>What did you notice about the solutions?</i> ■ <i>What was interesting?</i> ■ <i>Which solution would be easiest to do?</i> ■ <i>What would be an effective way of communicating your conclusions to top management? (If this is appropriate)</i> ■ <i>What kind of training program would you recommend?</i>	
Conclusion	See below	

Training Needs Assessment Workshop Three

Rational Objective: See above

Existential Aim: See above

Step	Procedure	Notes
Context	See above	
Movements	6 Repeat for each group. 7 <i>In the next session we will turn these solutions into training objectives.</i>	
Conclusion	Reflection 1 <i>We want to spend a few minutes reflecting about the team work.</i> 2 <i>What were the activities in your team?</i> 3 <i>Where was agreement easy?</i> 4 <i>When was it difficult?</i> 5 <i>How did you overcome difficulty?</i> 6 <i>If you were to change the decision making process in your team what changes would you make?</i>	

Underlying Performance Discrepancies Causes

Name of the Company:			
Function	Performance Discrepancy	Company Policy	Work Environment

Work Processes	Work Tools	Job Assignment	Knowledge, Skills or Attitudes

Training Needs Assessment Workshop Four

Rational Objective: To develop learning objectives from descriptions of performance discrepancies.

Existential Aim: To experience the power of concrete learning objectives.

Step	Procedure	Notes
Context	1 <i>This is the last session of this version of training needs assessment. Of course there are longer processes and shorter processes but we thought you would benefit from this kind of workshop. We want you to pay attention to how we do it.</i>	
Movements	1 We will work in the same teams again. 2 Now you will turn to creating learning objectives. I am going to ask you to use a formula to do this. It is verb, verb, noun, requirement. <i>Examples: To be able / to park / the car / between two other cars standing 6 metres from one another (this is a skill objective). To be able / to identify / the 50 standard road signs / within 30 minutes with 90% accuracy (This is a knowledge objective). To be able / to drive / a standard size car / confidently in traffic (This is an attitude objective).</i> 3 Write one or more learning objectives for each of the functions that have training solutions to the performance discrepancy. 4 You have one hour to do this. <i>Are there any questions?</i>	
Conclusion	See below	

Training Needs Assessment Workshop Four

Rational Objective: See above

Existential Aim: see above

Step	Procedure	Notes
Context	See above	
Movements	5 Have people give reports. Now let us look at the results. Let us see how well they meet the criteria of good learning objectives. (Have the first group present their flip chart.) a Are the objectives concrete, can you see someone doing it? What would they be doing? b Are the objectives feasible for the student to do? Can you really expect a student doing this after one hour? Are they feasible for the trainer to do? c Are the objectives understandable? Are they clear? d Are they measurable? Can you really find out whether the student has succeeded in meeting the requirements? 6 Repeat for each group.	
Conclusion	See below	

Training Needs Assessment Workshop Four

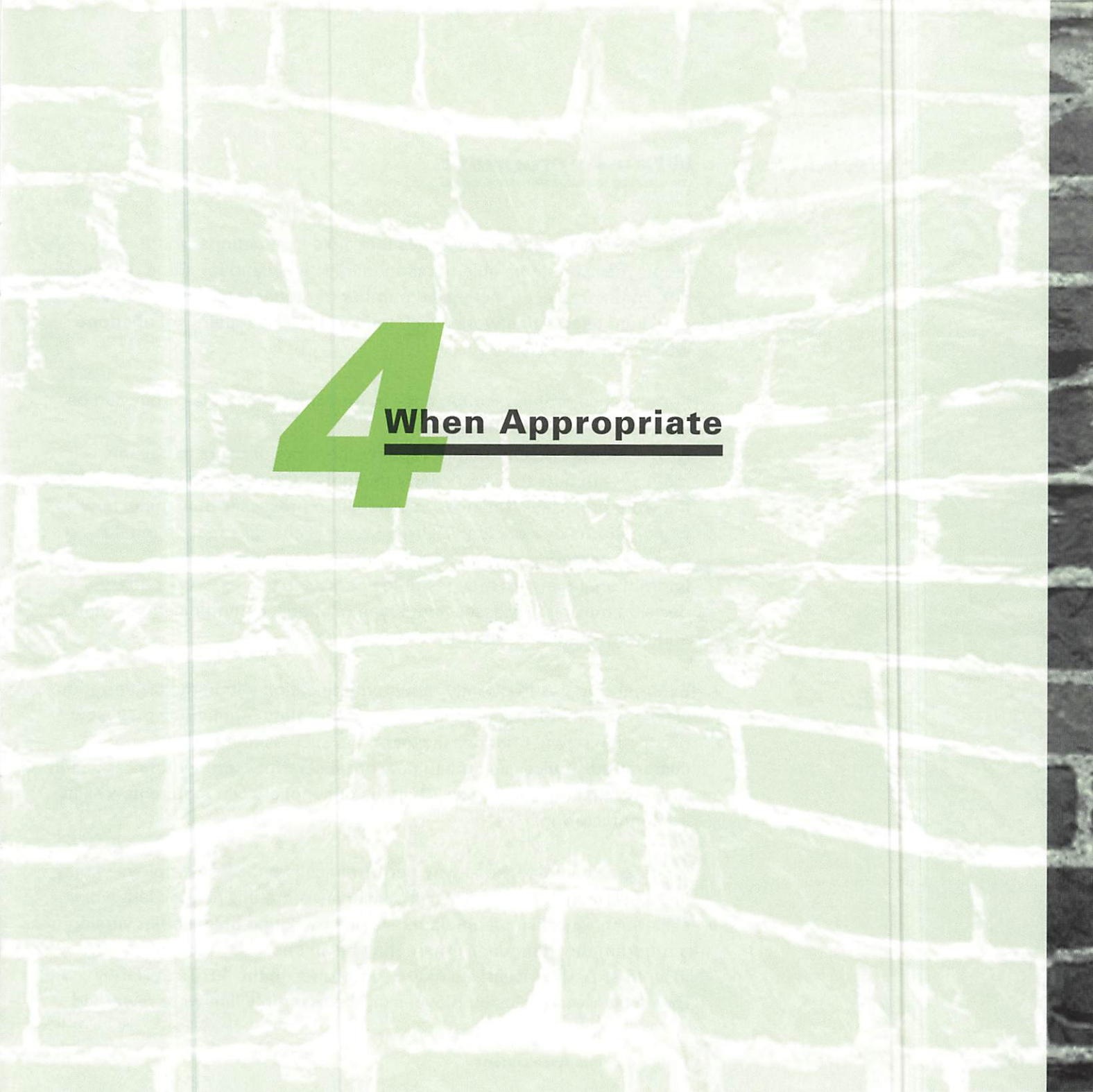
Rational Objective: See above

Existential Aim: See above

Step	Procedure	Notes
Context	See above	
Movements		
Conclusion	Reflection 1 Let us rehearse the steps we went through over the past two days. <i>What are the steps in this process?</i> 2 <i>What was easy?</i> 3 <i>What was difficult?</i> 4 <i>What is the most important part of this exercise?</i> 5 <i>What did you learn?</i> 6 <i>If a manager called and asked for a training program how would you do an assessment?</i> 7 <i>If you only had one hour what would you ask the manager?</i>	

Setting Learning Objectives

Function	Formula			
	Verb	Verb	Noun	Requirements



4 When Appropriate

Section Four: When Appropriate

Performance problems are issues that arise in situations where employees should be able to respond effectively and for some reason do not. For example, an increasing number of requests for repairs of a particular telecom network which implies that the repairs are not done well in the first place.

Performance problems often arise in the midst of changes. They can be internal or external changes.

New systems or technologies require operators or users to become familiar with how they work and managers to understand how they affect the work processes. Changes in production processes may mean new work patterns or work loads. Organizational changes may rationalize jobs, eliminating positions without eliminating the work load.

International mergers may result in conflicts in values, work patterns, decision making processes, employee relations, communication styles and many other problems.

External changes frequently require modification within the organization. New government regulations such as new safety regulations may slow production down. Changes in customers such as demands for more customized services can mean new products. New competitors can result in new marketing strategies. Changes of suppliers can require new skills in manufacturing.

There are several reasons why performance is poor. The employees may lack knowledge or skills. This also includes prerequisite knowledge or skills such as skills in fault diagnosis or knowledge of an earlier version of a programming language. There may be an absence of effective incentives or the incentives may be improper. In the 1970's at Harley Davidson Motorcycles employees on the assembly line were rewarded

for speed of production and not quality. The environment may be blocking people from doing their job. This includes other personnel, corporate policies and procedures and tools being used by the employee. Motivation may be low. That is the employee may not place high value in performing the way expected or may lack confidence in his or her ability to succeed.

Training may be automatic or habitual. Automatic training is training that always happens for legal, traditional, or public relations reasons. Some training is done out of habit, for example, annual sales meetings. Some is required by law, like annual reviews of safety regulations. Training can be done because it looks good to employees, owners or customers. Automatic training is done even when there is no particular problem.



5

How to Develop

Section Five: How to Develop

This section assumes that a series of interviews will be done followed by a workshop with those doing the interviews. This process can be done individually also. If the Training Needs Workshop is the method that will be used see the example workshops or develop one using the Basic Workshop Methods Companion. The workshop method can take one to five sessions to complete. The example is a four session workshop with the client. The other methods, such as Existent Data Analysis (EDA), Needs Assessment (NA), Subject Matter Analysis (SMA), Task Analysis (TA) are covered in other training literature.

The 360 degree method of interviews means that interviews are conducted with those above, below and peers of those for whom the Training Needs Assessment is being done. Four sets of questions should be developed to answer the following questions:

- 1** What expertise, skills and attitudes are required to perform the functions effectively and efficiently?
- 2** How effectively and efficiently are the functions performed?
- 3** If there is a discrepancy between what is required and what is present, what are the causes of the gap?
- 4** What can be done to improve the performance of those doing the functions?

Determining Performance Discrepancies form

After the interviews, the first step is to describe the target group using the Determining Performance Discrepancies form. Put in The Target Group box a description of the group of employees whose performance you are analyzing.

The second step is to describe the knowledge, skill and/or attitude they need to do their work effectively. Fill in the Optimal Knowledge, Skills or Attitude boxes.

The next step is to decide what the participants already can do, what they know about their job and what attitudes they have. Fill in the Actual Skills, Knowledge or Attitudes boxes.

The next step is to describe the Performance Discrepancies of the Target Group. What is the difference between what they can do, what they know and their current attitude and what they should be able to do, what they should know and what attitude they should have. The clearer and more detailed the answers to these questions, the more effective the analysis.

The Solutions to Performance Discrepancies Form

Turn to the Solution to Performance Discrepancies Form. Answer the questions 'Why are there any performance discrepancies?' 'What is the cause of these discrepancies?' Put the causes to the performance discrepancies in the Causes box. Remember the causes can be in company or departmental policy, working conditions, tools, work processes or the wrong person in the job.

Now consider non-training solutions to the underlying causes. Look at the various possible non-training solutions to performance discrepancies. If these solutions deal with the problems there is no need for training.

Now consider training solutions to the performance issues. To do this learning objectives are set. Fill in the knowledge, skills or attitude boxes of training solutions. What new knowledge, skill and/or attitude will be given in each of the modules? The criteria of a good objective are that it is clear, concrete, and feasible. Put each objective in the following form:

verb, verb, noun, requirement. Examples: *To be able / to park / the car / between two other cars standing 6 metres from one another* (this is a skill objective). *To be able / to identify / the 50 standard road signs / within 30 minutes with 90% accuracy* (This is a knowledge objective). *To be able / to drive / a standard size car / confidently in traffic* (This is an attitude objective).

Check each of the training objectives with the following questions.

- a** Are the objectives concrete, can you see someone doing it?
- b** Are the objectives feasible? Can you really expect a student doing this after the training?
- c** Are the objectives understandable? Are they clear?
- d** Are they measurable? If they are not measurable can you really find out whether the student has succeeded in meeting the requirements?

You now have a complete needs analysis.



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Worksheets

Determining Performance Discrepancies

The Target Group						
	Optimal	Knowledge			Actual	
		Skills				
		Attitudes				
	Performance Discrepancies	Knowledge				
		Skills				
		Attitudes				

Solutions to Performance Discrepancies

Causes	
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Potential Solutions

Non-Training Solutions	Work Environment	
	Organizational Policies	
	Work Procedures	
	Work Tools	
	Work Assignments	
Training Solutions	Knowledge	
	Skills	
	Attitudes	



Tips for Developing and Using

Section Seven: **Tips for Developing and Using**

Doing effective Training Needs Assessment is difficult. Clients frequently do not know why they want training. The client makes a request for a training program without a clear idea of what that will accomplish. This requires a clear strategy to help the client determine what is really required by his employees.

Often trainers offer programs because they have an existing program and want to sell it. The temptation is to interpret the clients needs to fit the programs, skills or capacity of the trainer rather than modify the programs, skills or capacity of the trainer to meet the needs of the client.



References

Section Eight: References

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'Training Needs Analysis: A resource for identifying training needs, selecting training strategies and developing training plans', by Sharon Bartram and Brenda Gibson SBG Associates, Gower Publishing Limited, Aldershot, Hampshire, England, 1995.

Notes