

DOT
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Transportation
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Learning & Development Resource Guide



Human Resource Services

TASC *Service / Value / Success*

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LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT RESOURCE GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, learning and development has been the function of the human resources office. Managers and supervisors have typically contributed by identifying employee learning and development needs. Sometimes, managers and supervisors need assistance in making decisions around individual and organizational performance. In a learning environment, however, evidence supports that successful organizations identify and link individual training needs to strategic mission and goals. Similarly, wise organizations calculate the economic investment of learning to a return-on-investment.

One of the goals of the Department of Transportation's Strategic Plan challenges organizations to foster an essence of learning. In support of this goal, managers and supervisors in the Office of the Secretary, Transportation Administrative Service Center (TASC) and the Bureau of Transportation Statistics have been delegated full authority to schedule and approve all learning and development activities.

This *Learning and Development Resource Guide* is intended to serve as a ready reference for establishing a learning environment. It provides an overview of the processes necessary to determine individual and organizational needs. The guide contains information pertaining to:

- roles and responsibilities
- practical tools and strategies
- evaluating learning and development activities
- how to recognize skill deficiencies versus performance problems
- informal and formal sources of training

The demand for new knowledge and skills is constant and an essential factor to sustaining organizational success. The ability to learn is not measured by what the organization and manager know, but rather by how together the manager and the organization learn. Learning is highly valued when problems are addressed and solved, repositories of "lessons learned" are built, and core competencies are created that represent collective learning. Superior performance depends on superior learning at every level of the organization.

Much of the conceptual work has been done. Tools and strategies that contribute to individual and organizational success are outlined in this guide. Not all learning requires dedicated monetary resources. Basically, all that is needed is the desire and commitment to learn.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Learning and development activities are essential elements in achieving organizational and individual goals and objectives. Many individuals play a key role:

Managers and Supervisors

Responsible for assessing, planning, addressing, and evaluating the specific learning and development needs of their employees. Decisions on learning and development activities are as important to the successful operation of an organization in meeting strategic goals as any other single management action.

Employees

Responsible for cooperating with and assisting the supervisor in making informed decisions and getting the most out of the learning provided. In the ideal situation, decisions regarding learning and development activities involve collaboration between the employee and the supervisor in accordance with potential, interest, and organizational needs.

Human Resource Professionals

Responsible for assisting managers and supervisors in assessing individual and organizational learning and development needs and identifying methods to meet those needs.

THE BUSINESS CASE

A business case is a method for projecting what benefits will be gained as a result of investing training dollars. Given limited resources, it is important to set priorities to ensure that the organization's most critical needs are met. Much is to be gained when learning and development activities are built into the organization's strategic plan.

The Business Case

Aligns organizational needs to the career development needs of employees in conjunction with overall mission and strategic goals.

Links performance goals and prioritizes training needs and decisions on investing training monies.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT MODEL

Analyzing learning and development needs includes an assessment of the organization in terms of the competencies needed by each office for successful mission accomplishment as well as an assessment of the needs of each employee.

Assessing Needs

Identifies the differences between actual and desired performance.

Identifies the skill deficiency.

Defines a course of action.

Organizations have determined Human Performance Technology (HPT) is one needs assessment model to help in this process. HPT is a proven performance consulting tool for improving organizational output and strengthening the relationship between individual and organizational performance. The HPT process combines experience, reflection, and conceptualization to improve human performance in the workplace. It adopts a systems view of organizations and offers a scientific method for bridging the gaps between optimal and actual performance. As such, it helps to answer basic, but important, initial questions about an organization, including:

- Are the goals, mission and responsibility of the organization stated in terms of measurable accomplishments?
- Are the organization's stated performance requirements sensible and measurable?
- Do the performance requirements clarify the difference between average and outstanding performance?
- Do people within the organization know what accomplishments are expected of them and what their standards of performance are?
- Are they accurately informed, as quickly as possible, about how well they are performing and does this information help to improve their performance?
- Where are the greatest opportunities for improving human performance in the organization?

HPT can improve performance through human resource programs, e.g., selection systems, rewards and recognition programs, human resources information systems process reengineering, career development, job design, and training. This makes it a logical follow-on for HR organizations seeking greater involvement in their agencies' performance improvement initiatives. The chart on page 7 illustrates the HPT process.

ASSESSING PERFORMANCE GAPS

The basis to organizational success is a workforce that is knowledgeable, flexible, efficient, and resilient. Where a gap exists between the performance needed on the job and the actual performance required to meet mission objectives, consider the following courses of action:

If the performance gap **is not** important, ignore it.

If the performance gap **is** the result of a skill deficiency that can be addressed by a learning and development activity, arrange a formal training solution.

If the performance gap **is not** the result of a skill deficiency, but rather a performance problem, then formal training **is not** the answer. Consult your human resources office on how to develop appropriate solutions for performance problems.

The checklist on the following pages will help to determine whether the benefits to be gained are organizational or individual in nature. Keep in mind, the benefits to be gained may influence the results of the business case.

ASSESS THE COMPETENCY/SKILL TO BE LEARNED

The following checklist is a guide in determining the competency and skill to be gained by the employee's participation in the learning and development opportunity. This list is not inclusive. Other competencies and skills relevant to specific organizational objectives and goals may be added. (The checklist can be used for assessing more than one employee. Simply duplicate the form.)

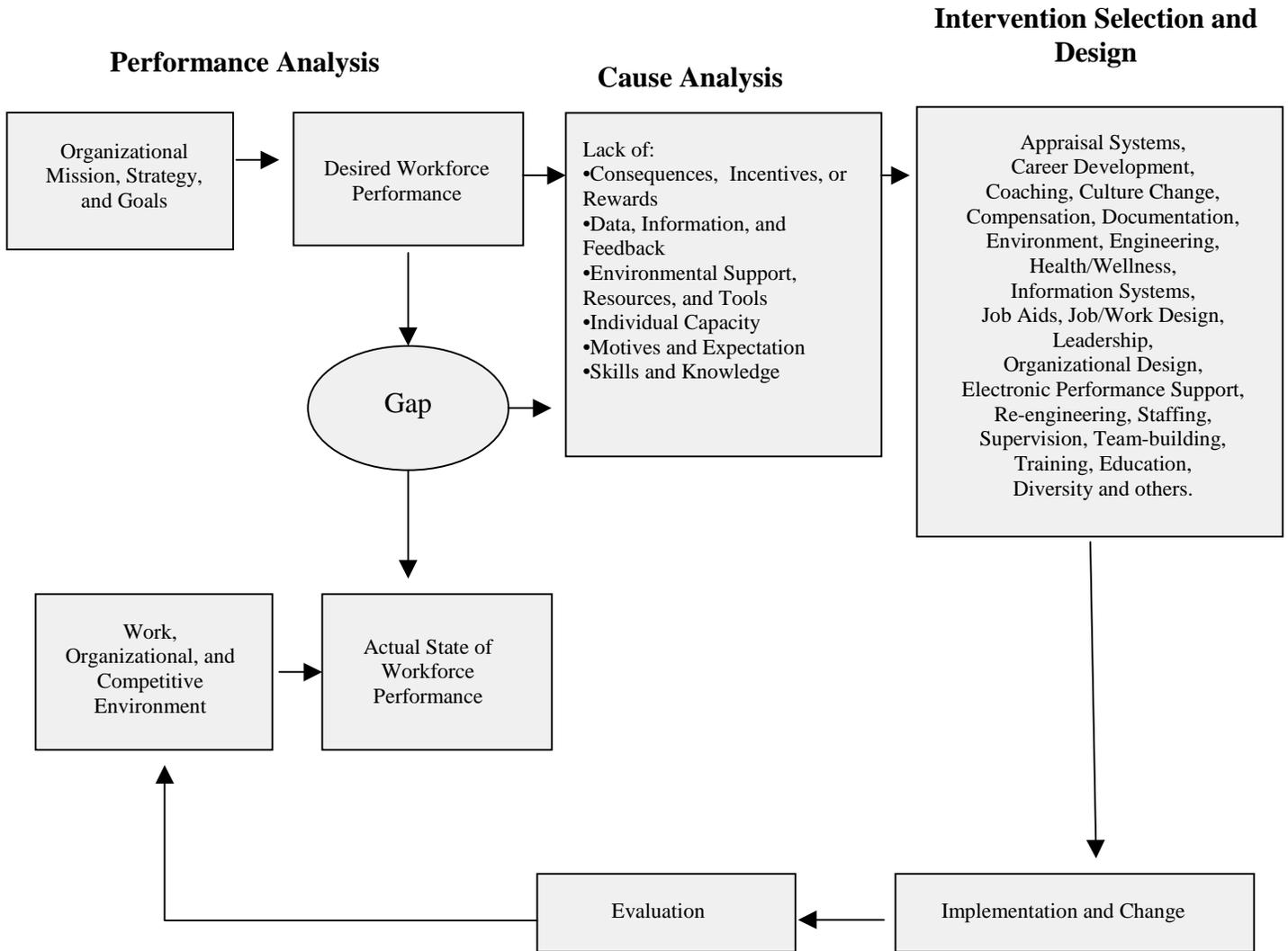
Employee: _____

COMPETENCY/SKILL	ORGANIZATIONAL (Required for position)	INDIVIDUAL (New skill or area to improve)
Communication		
Listening		
Formal Presentation		
Oral		
Written		
Facilitation		
Self/Life Management		
Ethics		
Assertiveness		
Stress Management		
Time Management		
Personal Presentation		
Interpersonal Skills		
Conflict Management		
Teamwork		
Diplomacy		
Diversity		
Networking		
Negotiating/Influencing		
Leadership		
Team Building		
Decisiveness		
Change Management		
Political Savvy		
Coaching		

COMPETENCY/SKILL	ORGANIZATIONAL (Required for position)	INDIVIDUAL (New skill or area to improve)
Organization		
Vision		
Strategic Planning		
Organizational Awareness		
External Awareness		
Performance Measurement And Improvement		
Customer Focus		
Administration and Management		
Human Resource Management		
Technology Application		
Information Analysis And Management		
Program/Process Management		
Analytical Thinking		
Creative Thinking		
Problem Solving		
Planning & Evaluating		
Marketing		
Market Analysis		
Message Development		
Distribution		
Advertising		
Other Competencies		

HUMAN PERFORMANCE TECHNOLOGY (HPT)

Follow the steps below to determine whether training is the best solution.

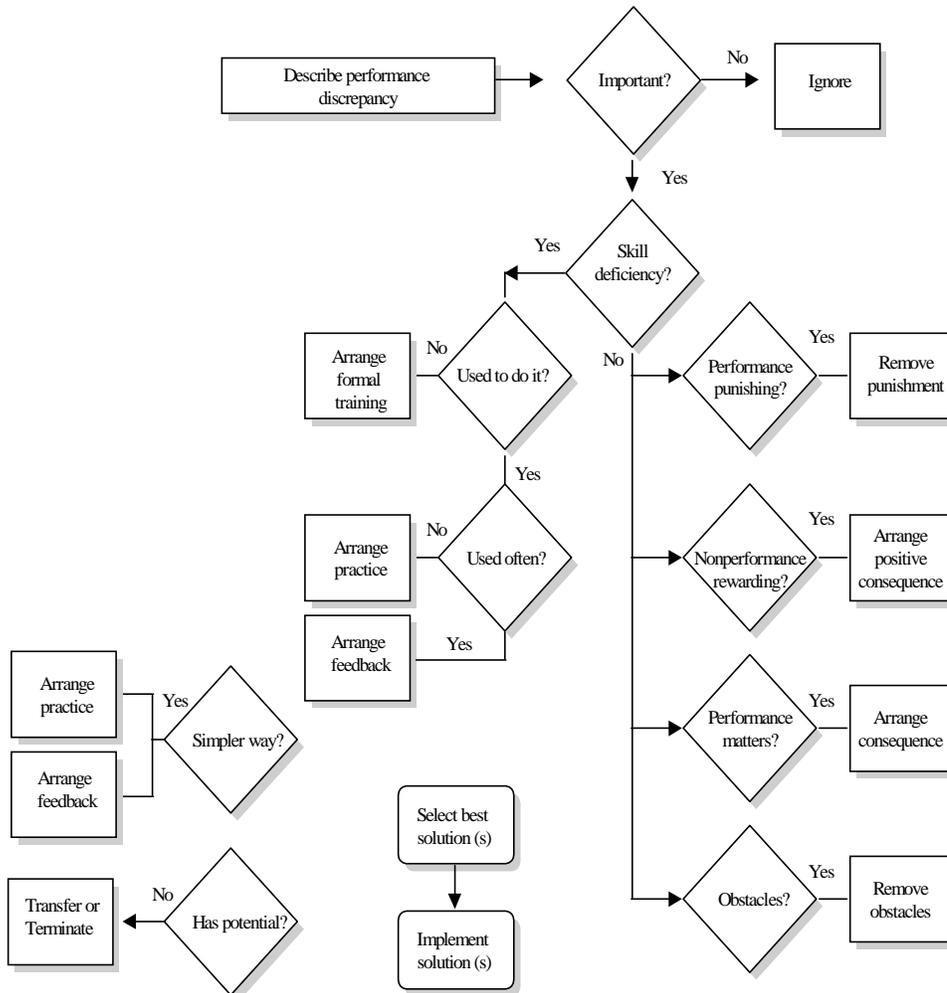


Performance Improvement Needs Analysis Model

Performance Analysis	<p>What isn't happening How does it impact the mission? Measure gap between actual/desired performance. Determine: (1) Competencies needed to reach organization goal; (2) Current skills/abilities. What is the cost of the problem?</p>
Cause Analysis	<p>Compare high/low performers. Identify incentives operating (both+and -) for individuals. Verify knowledge/understanding/impact of desired goal. Check adequacy of job aids, information, feedback from managers. Determine if workers have skills, knowledge needed. Identify variables in the internal/external environment than may have impact.</p>
Intervention	<p>Employee/employer expectations. Knowledge/skill level. Feedback and job support. Available resources. Business processes and operations. Cost-of-solution vs. cost-of-problem. Short-term and long-term approaches needed.</p>
Implementation	<p>Monitor baseline data. Monitor organizational variables impacting goal. Monitor external environment. Communicate the goal up and down the organization. Secure commitment. Address resistance and make changes.</p>
Evaluation	<p>Assess short/long term effectiveness. Measure changes in performance with all stakeholders. Focus on results of the process. Make necessary corrections. Determine lessons learned and share them for future use.</p>

IS THERE A PERFORMANCE PROBLEM?

Too often, training has been used to try to “fix” a performance problem. Use the following to determine if the performance issue requires another type of human resource development intervention. If the results of this evaluation indicate a performance discrepancy, consult your human resources office for advice on improving actual performance.



Key: Begin at the box entitled, “Describe performance discrepancy”. Ask yourself, “Is the gap a skill deficiency?” If the answer is yes, follow the arrows on the left side of diagram. If the answer is no, follow the arrows on the right side. More than likely, training is not the answer. Consult your human resources office for performance improvement options.

EVALUATING TRAINING

When the employee has returned from training, what is a reasonable organizational expectation to determine whether or not the benefit projected in the business case was actually realized? Depending on the newly acquired skill, the return on investment could be immediate. Often, however, in the case of highly technical skills, it may take several months or years before there is any change in the employee's performance.

Listed below are some measurable organizational benefits:

Human Performance Improvements:

Enhanced knowledge level
Improved Morale
Reduced waste
Increased professionalism

Organizational Benefits:

Increased productivity
Reduced turnover
Reduced cost
Increased customer satisfaction

There are a variety of formalized evaluation models available to measure a return on investment. One widely used model offers a simplistic four-level approach:

FOUR LEVEL EVALUATION MODEL*		
LEVEL	MEASURES	QUESTIONS ANSWERED
LEVEL I	Reaction	Did they like it?
LEVEL II	Outcome	Did they learn it?
LEVEL III	Transfer	Do they use it?
LEVEL IV	Organizational Results	Did it produce benefits?

*"Evaluating Training Programs" by Dr. Donald L. Kirkpatrick

For more detailed information on how to calculate the return on investments refer to the Department's Learning and Development Framework (Appendix B), which references the Secretary's Strategic Plan. Contact your human resource office to obtain a copy.

INFORMAL LEARNING

An informal strategy for individual learning costs little in time or money and has potentially big payoffs. Consider the following informal learning strategies when making a business case:

- Rotational Assignments
A temporary assignment to challenge employees and broaden understanding across different business processes of the organization.
- Special Assignments
Tasks or projects given as learning and development experiences.
- Coaching and Counseling
Learning assistance given through listening and feedback.
- Mentoring
A mentor, often a senior employee, facilitates personal and professional growth in an individual by sharing knowledge and insights.
- Learning Teams
Teams that meet regularly to focus on individual learning to improve own effectiveness.
- Self-development
Self-analysis of skills, personal development plans, networking.
- Individual Development Plan
A plan developed jointly by the employee and the manager/supervisor that identifies individual goals for employee growth in the context of organizational mission.

INTERNAL LEARNING RESOURCES

DOT CONNECTION CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTER

Organizations must develop employees to their fullest potential for greatest productivity. At the same time, employees need to take ultimate responsibility for managing their own careers.

TASC DOT Connection offers a variety of career development workshops and seminars designed to assist organizations in promoting learning and development. Emphasis is on providing employees with the tools, information, and resources needed to enhance their careers and benefit their organizations. Services can be custom tailored for an organization or employees can participate on an individual basis

Services Offered:

- ⇒ Career Development Workshops
- ⇒ Worklife Programs
- ⇒ Employment Information

To discuss organizational and/or individual employee career needs, contact TASC DOT Connection on (202) 366-9392, (800) 525-2878 or (202) 366-7630 (TDD).

For a private and confidential appointment with TASC DOT Connection's Career Consultant call (202) 366-4887.

Special accommodations, including a Sign Language Interpreter, are available upon request. See page 12 for additional information.

For additional information, email: dotconnection@tasc.dot.gov.

Address: DOT Connection
SVC-102, Room PL-402
400 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20590

TRANSPORTATION VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY

The Transportation Virtual University (TVU) offers the most comprehensive library of web-delivered self-directed learning courses and performance support tools, addressing a vast range of professional and technical effectiveness skills. TVU's charter is to provide federal, state/local, industry partners and educational organizations with "Web-Based Learning" that can be accessed cost-effectively on a global basis. In support of that charter, TVU provides over 290 Business/Professional Development courses and over 470 information technology and technical courses.

With 200+ new courses per year, TVU has emerged as the clear leader in management and technical content coverage for web-based delivery. TVU's Critical Skills Library is focused on two major aspects of effective business performance: *professional effectiveness* and *expertise*. Additionally, TVU offers a wide variety of classroom training, including end-user computer training and Professional Development.

Special Features:

- ⇒ Ease of Use, Functionality
- ⇒ College Accreditation
- ⇒ Deployment Options
- ⇒ e-Individual Development Plans (e-IDPs)
- ⇒ Live On-Line subject matter experts
- ⇒ Employee Satisfaction Surveys
- ⇒ 360 Leadership Feedback Surveys

For more information about TVU, call (202) 366-5019 or log onto www.tvu.dot.gov.

<p style="text-align: center;">EXTERNAL CAREER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES</p>

DOT is invited to participate in a number of external programs on an annual basis. These programs include:

National Defense University

Every academic year, the Department of Transportation is invited to nominate two candidates to attend the U.S. Naval War College. One candidate (GS-13 to GS-15) may attend the senior resident **College of Naval Warfare** and the other candidate (GS-11 to GS-13) may attend the intermediate resident **College of Naval Command and Staff**. Both colleges are located in Newport, Rhode Island.

The Department is also invited to nominate two candidates to attend the **Industrial College of the Armed Forces (ICAF)**. The nominees for this program should possess a graduate degree and be identified by their organization as on track for executive-level service.

You may find more information by browsing NDU Homepage at <http://www.ndu.edu>.

Federal Executive Institute (FEI)

In May of each year, the Federal Executive Institute (FEI) announces its schedule of programs for the coming fiscal year. FEI's Leadership for a Democratic Society (LDS) programs are the centerpiece of their offerings. Of the ten LDS programs scheduled, three are Applied Learning Programs (ALP). Executives participating in the ALP attend the program for two weeks, return to their offices, and then three months later return to FEI for the final two weeks of the program. The program content in the split-session format is very similar to the regular four-week program. The program is restricted to employees at the GS-15 level or above. The Department receives a proposed allocation of spaces from FEI. The spaces are filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

For more specific information on qualification requirements and the nomination process, please contact your Administrative Officer or TASC HR Services on (202) 366-4075 or go to our website at www.opm.gov/fei.

OTHER FEDERAL TRAINING SOURCES

Numerous opportunities exist for sources of training. The following are two primary federal training sites that also link to other pertinent training sources:

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management's Training and Management Assistance (TMA) program offers training and human resource development projects. If you would like more information about the TMA, visit our website at www.opm.gov.

Graduate School, US Department of Agriculture

The Graduate School, US Department of Agriculture (USDA) offers quality training, development, and education for organizations and individuals committed to public service. To access the online course catalog, visit the website at www.grad.usda.gov or call our nationwide toll free number (888) 744-GRAD.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

DOT DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER *“A Model for Workplace Accommodation”*

The Disability Resource Center (DRC) was established in 1999 as a nationwide resource for all DOT. To ensure that employees with disabilities in the U. S. Department of Transportation can participate fully and contribute to all aspects of the Department’s work, programs, and services, the following goals have been established:

GOALS OF THE CENTER

1. Provide information about and resources for obtaining workplace accommodations.
2. Advise the Department on maintaining, improving, or increasing facilities and program accessibility.
3. Promote the inclusion of disability perspectives in Departmental programs and initiatives.
4. Increase awareness of disability issues among all department employees through education and training.

The DRC Can Help You Meet Learning and Development Needs By:

- Providing accommodations such as sign language interpreters to enable employees with disabilities to participate in training sessions.
- Arranging job accommodations for employees with disabilities on developmental details, for discussions with mentors and career counselors and for similar developmental activities.
- Providing disability awareness training to individuals and groups.
- Conducting job needs assessments for performance of the current job with employees with disabilities and their supervisors, and acquiring reasonable accommodations to remove performance obstacles.
- Providing training to employees with disabilities in the most productive use of job accommodations.
- Serving as a resource to ensure employees with disabilities have the opportunity to participate in Department programs and initiatives.

For further information contact the DRC:

Address: U.S. DOT Disability Resource Center
SVC-104, Room 2110
400 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20590

Phone: (202) 493-0625 (voice)
(202) 366-5273 (TDD)

Fax: (202) 366-3571
E-Mail: drc@tasc.dot.gov

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