Syllabus

Course Overview

For individuals and organizations to compete successfully in an era of rapid change and global competition, continuous learning and performance improvement are high priorities. Every year, organizations spend large amounts of time and resources on training and workplace development initiatives with the goal of greater productivity. Unfortunately, many organizations commit to training and improvement solutions without taking the time to assess the real root causes of the performance problems or opportunities. Without an upfront, systematic needs assessment, the selection of solutions can be random, making it more likely that the solution will fail to address the real needs of the organization. A systematic approach to planning for improved performance begins with a thorough performance analysis as part of a comprehensive needs assessment.

In this course, you will define and conduct needs assessment as an important step in performance improvement. According to Sleezer, Russ-Eft, and Gupta (2014), *needs assessment* is a broad term that usually involves several related and discrete steps: "Needs assessment is a process for examining and framing people-related problems and performance improvement opportunities" (p. 1).

This course provides a model of performance analysis and needs assessment that can be used in a variety of contexts. You will explore in depth the methods used to accomplish the needs assessment process. Mastering the concept and process of needs assessment will enable you to be more productive in the selection and delivery of solutions, regardless of the kind of organization in which you work. This very active, hands-on course will give you practical tools with which you will conduct a real-world organizational needs assessment. There is a lot to learn in this course, but a great deal more to take away.

In this course, you will conduct real-life research on an existing problem in an organization of your choice. You will find that the analysis of the problem often has surprising, valuable, and rewarding results. Often, the solutions that come from a needs assessment are different than the prevailing wisdom.

In this course, you will learn the competencies in a systematic manner. Weekly assignments, when woven together in finished form, will comprise your course project. Given this interwoven course structure, it is important that, within the first unit, you immediately select a performance problem as your focus for your course project.

Human Performance Improvement

This course focuses on the broader discipline of human performance improvement (HPI), which:

1. Is results-based and systematic.
2. Does not follow a wants-based or needs-based approach, as training often does.
3. Uses gap and cause analysis techniques.
4. Focuses on accomplishments instead of behavior.
5. Supports organizational goals by improving processes and ensuring appropriate support for individual and team work.
6. Relies upon holistic systems thinking to examine performance in organizations.

The overall HPI model used in this course, performance improvement leadership (PIL), and the Training and Performance Improvement (T&PI) curricula at Capella University include the following phases:

1. Performance analysis.
2. Gap and cause analysis.
3. Intervention selection and design.
4. Intervention implementation and maintenance.
5. Evaluation of results.
6. Change management.

Needs Assessment

A sound needs assessment provides a clear map to systematic improvement. With limited time and resources available for learning in organizations, needs assessment is the first logical step in solving a performance problem. Upfront analysis as part of an effective needs assessment process is worth the time and money spent, because it results in quality and long-term solutions to problems. Needs assessments that are well planned and executed should provide a positive impact on organizational accomplishment and return on investment (ROI).

Course Textbooks

Our challenge as professionals is not only to master the design and execution of needs assessments, but to market their value to our clients. We must constantly ask ourselves how our work will ultimately demonstrate a return on investment (ROI).

Rossett's 2009 e-book, *First Things Fast: A Handbook for Performance Analysis*, introduces needs assessment and the barriers and misconceptions that often surround it. Sleezer, Russ-Eft, and Gupta's 2014 e-book, *A Practical Guide to Needs Assessment*, provides a wealth of information and practical

tools you will use throughout the course. Robinson Robinson, Phillips, Phillips, and Handshaw's 2015 text, *Performance Consulting: A Strategic Process to Improve, Measure, and Sustain Organizational Results*, is another practical volume, including useful tools, models, and checklists.

Project-Related Assignments

This course reflects the building block approach. Instead of creating a final paper during the last few weeks of the course, you will work on one section or building block each week. You will draft and post project-related assignments in peer-review discussions, which you will revise by incorporating peer feedback and submit as assignments for grading the following week. These seven assignments will become your final project, which you will submit at the end of the course. The final project represents how you have synthesized the project-related assignments, your research results, and any recommendations you have reached, while applying one of the five foundational human performance technology (HPT) models we will study in this course.

Assignments

- **Week 2**: Needs Assessment Issue Selection – Complete the Preliminary Performance Problem Worksheet and draft a narrative (200 words) that present your selection of a specific performance issue for the course project. – 8% of grade. *Scoring Guide*
- **Week 3**: Kick-Off Interview – Conduct an interview with a high-level executive in the organization you have selected for your course project and summarize the interview findings in a report. – 8% of grade. *Scoring Guide*
- **Week 4**: Research Methods – Draft a narrative that explains at least two research methods you will employ to gather data for the needs assessment. You will also design the research instruments to collect the data from the targeted groups. – 8% of grade. *Scoring Guide*
- **Week 5**: Gap Analysis – Complete the Gap Analysis Worksheet and draft a narrative where you discuss how you can use this worksheet as your needs assessment project progresses. – 8% of grade. *Scoring Guide*
- **Week 6**: Cause Map – Create a cause map and draft a narrative about the cause map. This assignment includes several critical resources designed to help you create your cause map. – 8% of grade. *Scoring Guide*
- **Week 7**: Job Task Analysis – Conduct an interview with someone whose job role is affected by the issue you are investigating. Then complete a toolkit form that will help you draft a job task analysis (JTA) narrative. – 8% of grade. *Scoring Guide*
- **Week 8**: Presentation of Research Findings – Present the data from your course research in a cumulative narrative report. – 8% of grade. *Scoring Guide*
- **Week 10**: Needs Assessment – Revise, integrate, and expand upon all previous assignments completed for the course to create a comprehensive needs assessment report (20–25 pages) with associated appendices. – 24% of grade. *Scoring Guide*

Discussions

There will be at least one discussion in each week in this course. Several of these discussions will be required peer-review activities. Participation in discussions will count for 20 percent of your final grade.

- **Week 1**: Discuss your professional experiences and complete a peer-review activity.
- **Week 2**: Create a case study scenario and complete a peer-review activity.
- **Week 3**: Create an assessment tool for a case study and complete a peer-review activity.
- **Week 4**: Discuss how to use existing data and complete a peer-review activity.
- **Week 5**: Discuss the distinctions between needs assessment and competency-based assessment and complete a peer-review activity.
- **Week 6**: Discuss a project-related article and complete a peer-review activity.
- **Week 7**: Discuss ethics questions and complete a peer-review activity.
- **Week 8**: Discuss foundational needs assessment models and explain the interventions you recommend in your project.
- **Week 9**: Complete a peer-review activity.
- **Week 10**: Discuss and reflect on your experiences in this course.

Reference

Sleezer, C. M., Russ-Eft, D. F., & Gupta, K. (2014). *A practical guide to needs assessment* (3rd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Wiley.

Course Competencies   **(Read Only)**

To successfully complete this course, you will be expected to:

1   Diagnose performance issues in organizational systems.

2   Employ appropriate research and investigation methods.

3   Conduct a needs assessment.

4   Consult with internal entities to improve performance.

5   Communicate clearly and effectively.

Syllabus >> Course Materials

 Required

The materials listed below are required to complete the learning activities in this course.

  Integrated Materials

Many of your required books are available via the VitalSource Bookshelf link in the courseroom, located in your Course Tools. Registered learners in a Resource Kit program can access these materials using the courseroom link on the Friday before the course start date. Some materials are available only in hard-copy format or by using an access code. For these materials, you will receive an email with further instructions for access. Visit the Course Materials page on Campus for more information.

Course Pack

These required readings are in a digital course pack on the VitalSource platform, available via the VitalSource Bookshelf link in the courseroom, located in your Course Tools.

Mager, R. F., & Pipe, P. (1997). Quick-reference checklist & final thoughts. In *Analyzing performance problems: Or, you really oughta wanna—How to figure out why people aren't doing what they should be, and what to do about it,* (pp. 161–169).

Library

The following required readings are provided in the Capella University Library or linked directly in this course. To find specific readings by journal or book title, use Journal and Book Locator. Refer to the Journal and Book Locator library guide to learn how to use this tool.

- Gilbert, T. F. (1996). *Human competence: Engineering worthy performance* (Tribute ed.). Silver Spring, MD: International Society for Performance Management.
- Harless, J. (1996). Great ideas revisited. *Training & Development, 50*(1), 52.
- Kaufman, R. (1992). *Strategic planning plus: An organizational guide.* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Marrelli, A. F. (2004). The performance technologist's toolbox: Surveys. *Performance Improvement*, *43*(10), 38–43.
- Marrelli, A. F. (2005). The performance technologist's toolbox: Observations. *Performance Improvement, 44*(2), 39–43.
- Marrelli, A. F. (2005). The performance technologist's toolbox: Process mapping. *Performance Improvement, 44*(5), 40–44.
- Robinson, D. G., Robinson, J. C., Phillips, J. J., Phillips, P. P., & Handshaw, D. (2015). *Performance consulting: A strategic process to improve, measure, and sustain organizational results* (3rd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.
- Rooney, J. J., & Vanden Houvel, L. N. (2004). Root cause analysis for beginners. *Quality Progress, 37*(7), 45–53.
- Rossett, A. (2009). *First things fast: A handbook for performance analysis* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Pfeiffer.
- Rothwell, W. J. (2004). *Beyond training and development: The groundbreaking classic on human performance enhancement* (2nd. ed.). New York, NY: AMACOM.
- Rothwell, W. J. (2013). *Performance consulting: Applying performance improvement in human resource development.* Somerset, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- Rummler, G. A., & Brache, A. P. (2012). *Improving performance: How to manage the white space on the organization chart* (3rd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Sleezer, C. M., Russ-Eft, D. F., & Gupta, K. (2014). *A practical guide to needs assessment* (3rd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Wiley.
- Swanson, R. A. (2007). *Analysis for improving performance: Tools for diagnosing organizations and documenting workplace expertise* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.

External Resource

Please note that URLs change frequently. While the URLs were current when this course was designed, some may no longer be valid. If you cannot access a specific link, contact your instructor for an alternative URL. Permissions for the following links have been either granted or deemed appropriate for educational use at the time of course publication.

- CauseMapping. (2009, May 17). *Root cause analysis - Titanic* [Video]. | Transcript Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GOVeO5_0qD0
- *Designing structured interviews for educational research* [PDF]. (1997). *Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation, 5*(12).
- Grudens-Schuck, N., Allen, B. L. & Larson, K. (2004). *Focus group fundamentals* [PDF]. Available from http://www.extension.iastate.edu
- ThinkReliability. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.thinkreliability.com/
- Wechsler, L. (2017). The art of job task analysis. Retrieved from https://www.omep.org/the-art-of-job-task-analysis/

Suggested

The following materials are recommended to provide you with a better understanding of the topics in this course. These materials are not required to complete the course, but they are aligned to course activities and assessments and are highly recommended for your use.

Optional

The following optional materials are offered to provide you with a better understanding of the topics in this course. These materials are not required to complete the course.

Introduction

Performance Problems

Imagine a call center supervisor receives a series of complaints from callers who say they have to wait too long before their calls are answered. Any organization can face performance problems. These problems may be small or large, short term or long term, complex or easy to solve. However, only by doing a needs assessment can we discover the real causes of the problem so that we can come up with a real solution.

Most of us agree that needs assessments are a good idea, but many practitioners are unclear about the potential methods for, benefits of, and barriers to the process. Those of us involved in planning solutions for performance improvement are often asked to quickly design interventions, which may include a training program or a non-training solution. But we are not always given the time to do the kind of in-depth analysis that is actually needed for the situation at hand.

This week, you will define needs assessment and your experience with needs assessment, and select the issue that you will investigate in your course project.

To-Do List:

- **Discussion**: Draft and submit next week's assignment, Needs Assessment Issue Selection, for peer review.
- **Discussion**: Share some of your professional experiences with needs assessment.
- **What You Need to Know**: Read about the basics of performance analysis and needs assessment.
- **Prepare**: Begin the process of soliciting an interview with an organizational leader.

Learning Activities

u01s1 - Activity Overviews

Discussion Overview

Peer Review

Post a complete draft of next week's assignment, Needs Assessment Issue Selection, so that you can receive feedback from your peers. Provide helpful and constructive feedback for two of your peers to help them improve their drafts.

Needs Assessment

Discuss the organizational role of needs assessment with your fellow learners.

u01s2 - What You Need to Know

Training in Context

Over the past several decades, the concept of training has evolved into *human resource development*, an umbrella term that includes training and development, organizational development, and career development. In this course, as in all Capella courses on T&PI, training will be considered subordinate to performance improvement.

From the viewpoint of an organization as one complex system, it is important to remember that a single training event will rarely be sufficient by itself to completely solve a given performance improvement problem. In many a performance improvement situation, training may not be needed at all. When it is needed, it usually is just part of the solution, and it is only occasionally the entire solution. Listen to Learner Testimonials to hear previous learners' perspectives on successfully conducting a needs assessment.

Needs Assessment

Use the Capella University Library to read the following:

- Rossett, a leading author about the real-world value of doing needs assessments, shows in these chapters how to quickly understand the underlying reasons that problems occur in organizations. Knowing the true causes, she argues, is vital to ever being able to solve the problem.
  - Rossett, A. (2009). *First things fast: A handbook for performance analysis* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Pfeiffer.
    - Chapter 1, "Introduction," pages 1–14.
    - Chapter 2, "What Can We Do First and Fast?" pages 15–34.
    - Chapter 3, "Performance Analysis Basics," pages 35–68.
- Sleezer, Russ-Eft, and Gupta provide key terms, benefits of needs assessment, and various approaches that can help uncover causes of organizational problems.
  - Sleezer, C. M., Russ-Eft, D. F., & Gupta, K. (2014). *A practical guide to needs assessment* (3rd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Wiley.
    - Chapter 1, "Overview of Needs Assessment," pages 15–33.
- Joseph Harless created the term front-end analysis, another term for needs assessment. In this article, Harless examines pressing issues in the HPI field.
  - Harless, J. (1996). Great ideas revisited. *Training & Development, 50*(1), 52.

Course Project Requirements

There will be eight graded weekly assignments in this course, and the final one is the Needs Assessment course project. Read the course project description now so that you can understand the requirements you will be working toward each week.

u01d1 - Write Your Discussion Post

Peer Review: Needs Assessment Issue Selection

In this discussion, you will complete a draft of the first assignment, Needs Assessment Issue Selection, which is the first of several assignments that will build toward completion of your final course project.

For your course project, you will conduct a detailed needs assessment of an organizational performance issue. To begin your project, you must first choose a specific organizational performance issue in an organization of your choice.

For this discussion, carefully review the Week 2 assignment instructions before you do the following:

- Review the Completing the Preliminary Performance Problem Worksheet media.
- Complete Preliminary Performance Problem Worksheet [DOC].
- Attach a complete draft of the Week 2 assignment to this discussion so that you can receive feedback from your peers.
- Provide helpful and constructive feedback for two of your peers to help them improve their drafts.

Respond to Your Peers

After you have posted a complete draft of the assignment to the discussion board, review the drafts of two of your fellow learners and provide constructive feedback that might help them improve their drafts next week before they submit their assignments to be graded.

Refer to the assignment scoring guide when making your suggestions and cite the grading criteria when appropriate. Review the Discussion Participation Scoring Guide to learn how the instructor will evaluate your discussion participation.

Note: After you receive and consider feedback from your peers, you will incorporate the changes you judge appropriate and submit the revised Week 2 assignment for a grade next week.

Course Resources

Graduate Discussion Participation Scoring Guide

u01d2 - Write Your Discussion Post

Sleezer, Russ-Eft, and Gupta (2014) use the term *needs assessment* while Rossett (2009) uses the term *performance analysis*, but the two phrases mean the same thing for our purposes. In this course, we will use the term *needs assessment* in its broadest sense.

Prepare a post based on the following topics and questions. In your own words:

- Define briefly the purpose of conducting a needs assessment when an organization identifies a performance issue. Include a clear distinction between a performance needs assessment and a training needs assessment.
- Describe briefly the work you perform within the organization in which you are employed:
  - Identify any experiences you have had in planning or conducting a needs assessment for a performance issue. If you have not had experience in this area, describe how needs assessment could be implemented in your workplace to address an organizational performance issue.
  - Identify any experiences you have had in planning or participating in a non-training performance improvement strategy, such as a redesign of a workflow process, an incentive program, or a similar change. Describe how a non-training performance improvement strategy could be implemented in your workplace to address a human performance issue.

- Explain how you might be a resource to others as the course progresses.

Respond to Your Peers

Respond to the post of two other learners with clear writing, using proper grammar, spelling, and APA formatting. Make sure your responses are substantive; integrate course readings to support key points and analysis.

Read the Discussion Participation Scoring Guide to learn how the instructor will evaluate your discussion participation.

References

Rossett, A. (2009). *First things fast: A handbook for performance analysis* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Pfeiffer.

Sleezer, C. M., Russ-Eft, D. F., & Gupta, K. (2014). *A practical guide to needs assessment* (3rd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Wiley.

Course Resources

Graduate Discussion Participation Scoring Guide

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u01s3 - Prepare: Kick-Off Interview

For the Kick-Off Interview discussion next week, you will conduct an interview with a high-level executive in the organization you have targeted for your project. This person should be familiar with the issue you are studying. Your conversation will have two purposes:

1. To explain the purpose of your needs assessment project. Your goal is to gain that person's support for the project. (You need to have buy-in from key executive staff to conduct your proposed needs assessment.)
2. To solicit that person's key insights, facts, and opinions about the nature and causes of the issue you are investigating. This person is likely to be well informed about the issue and be able to help focus your next efforts. (You need a starting point to determine the next research steps in your needs assessment. This is an opportunity to gather needed information and determine what further information is necessary.)

Take some time this week to identify the organizational leader you will interview and begin the process of soliciting an appointment time for next week.

Unit 2 ≫ Kick-Off Interview

Introduction

Kicking Off the Assessment Process

A performance consultant has been hired by a transportation company to help solve the high attrition rate of truck drivers. Before she begins her work, the consultant needs more information from a manager about the problem and possible causes. She begins to make a list of preliminary questions she can ask the manager to help in her investigation.

One of the key skills for HPI practitioners is explaining the importance of needs assessment to those unfamiliar with the process. Managers, burdened with many immediate problems, often skip investigation of the causes of a problem and simply jump to solutions. This is why conversing with the client (managers or other stakeholders) very early in a project is vital for two key reasons: it lets the practitioner discuss the advantages of needs assessment, and learn the client's perspectives on what is causing the issue under investigation. The client and the practitioners can then agree on the next steps in the needs assessment.

To-Do List:

- **Assignment**: Revise and submit this week's assignment, Needs Assessment Issue Selection, for a grade.
- **Discussion**: Draft and submit next week's assignment, Kick-Off Interview, for peer review.
- **Discussion**: Talk about a case study scenario with your fellow learners.
- **What You Need to Know**: Read about approaches to starting the needs assessment process.

Learning Activities

u02s1 - Activity Overviews

Assignment Overview

For this week's assignment, Needs Assessment Issue Selection, you will complete the Preliminary Performance Problem Worksheet and draft a narrative (200 words) that present your selection of a specific performance issue for the course project.

Discussion Overview

Peer Review

Post a complete draft of next week's assignment, Kick-Off Interview, so that you can receive feedback from your peers. Provide helpful and constructive feedback for two of your peers to help them improve their drafts.

Performance Issue Scenario

Discuss the importance of needs assessment with your fellow learners.

u02s2 - What You Need to Know

Starting the Needs Assessment

Both Rossett (2009) and Rothwell (2013) explain how to get a needs assessment project started on the right track by collaborating with stakeholders and by identifying the best resources to gain insights into the origins of a problem being studied.

Use the Capella library to read the following:

- Rossett, A. (2009). _First things fast: A handbook for performance analysis_ (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Pfeiffer.
    - Chapter 4, "Opportunities for Performance Analysis," pages 69–88.
    - Chapter 5, "Putting the Speed in Performance Analysis," pages 89–112.
    - Part of Chapter 6, "Communicating to Gather Information and Support," pages 127–145.
- Rothwell, W. J. (2013). _Performance consulting: Applying performance improvement in human resource development_. Somerset, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

◦ Chapter 4, "Analyzing the Present."

Needs Assessment Models

Mager and Pipe offer a widely-read description of how to conduct a needs assessment. This is the first of five models you will read this term. Later, you will select one of the five to apply in your final paper.

Read the following from your coursepack:

- Mager, R. F., & Pipe, P. (1997). *Analyzing performance problems: Or, you really oughta wanna—How to figure out why people aren't doing what they should be, and what to do about it*. Atlanta, GA: CEP Press.
    ◦ "Introduction: Considering the Whole," pages 1–6.
    ◦ "They're Not Doing What They Should Be Doing," pages 6–15.
    ◦ "Quick-Reference Checklist & Final Thoughts," pages 161–169.

u02a1 - Needs Assessment Issue Selection

Overview

This assignment is the first in a series of eight assignments that culminates in your final project, Needs Assessment:

- ***Week 2: Needs Assessment Issue Selection.***
- Week 3: Kick-Off Interview.
- Week 4: Research Methods.
- Week 5: Gap Analysis.
- Week 6: Cause Map.
- Week 7: Job Task Analysis.
- Week 8: Presentation of Research Findings.
- Week 10: Needs Assessment.

In this assignment, you will identify a performance issue at the organization where you work or any other organization you would like to explore. Some performance issues identified by previous learners include:

- There are many errors in paychecks at a company.
- Club members are not participating in fundraising.
- Church financial reports are often late.
- The teachers are not using the new whiteboards.
- Operating room nurses are resigning.
- Inventory records often do not match the floor stock.
- Customer service is too slow in making repairs.

Instructions

First, review the Completing the Preliminary Performance Problem Worksheet media and complete the following worksheet:

- Preliminary Performance Problem Worksheet [DOC].

In addition to your revised Preliminary Performance Problem Worksheet, include a narrative of approximately 200 words. In your narrative:

1. Identify a performance issue in an organizational system.
    ◦ Identify a current, not future issue.
    ◦ Ensure you are not looking at a solution instead of an issue. Training is a solution, for instance.
    ◦ Note that you certainly do *not* have to conduct a study where you work.
    ◦ Do not think just of corporations and businesses; you can study a nonprofit, a school, a company, a church, a military unit, a hospital, or a club, or almost any existing organization. The field is wide open.
    ◦ Note that the key is having access to people and information in the organization, and focusing on a real organizational performance problem that you will investigate.
    ◦ Be sure all projects must deal with adults. We do not work with children's learning or performance.
    ◦ Select an organizational performance gap project to study that is very doable, that is, narrow enough to fit the timeline of the course, but rich enough to explore and research in multiple ways.
2. Explain the rationale for selecting a specific performance issue.

- Consider the importance of the problem, its scope, and your access to conducting real-world research into its causes within the time frame of this course.
- Ensure the problem is right-sized, that is, large enough to involve multiple people or processes, yet small enough to be manageable.

3. Explain the benefits of conducting a needs assessment on a selected performance issue.
   - Avoid talking about the benefits of the solution; focus instead on benefits from doing the needs assessment itself.

4. Complete a preliminary analysis of a performance problem to develop an initial outline for a project.
   - Complete the analysis using the Preliminary Performance Problem Worksheet.
   - Be succinct in the worksheet keeping the majority of explanation in the narrative.

5. Adhere to the rules of grammar, usage, and mechanics.

Additional Requirements

Your assignment should also meet the following requirements:

- **Written communication**: Written communication should be scholarly, professional, and consistent with expectations in a professional context.
- **APA format**: The body of narrative, references, and citations should be formatted according to current APA style and formatting guidelines.
- **Font and font size**: Times New Roman, 12 point.

Note: Your instructor may use the Writing Feedback Tool when grading this assignment. The Writing Feedback Tool is designed to provide you with guidance and resources to develop your writing based on five core skills. You will find writing feedback in the Scoring Guide for the assignment, once your work has been evaluated. Learn more about the Writing Feedback Tool on the course Tools and Resources page.

Competencies Measured

By successfully completing this assignment, you will demonstrate your proficiency in the following course competencies:

- Competency 1: Diagnose performance issues in organizational systems.
  - Identify a performance issue in an organizational system.
  - Explain the rationale for selecting a specific performance issue.
  - Explain the benefits of conducting a needs assessment on a selected performance issue.

- Competency 5: Communicate clearly and effectively.
  - Complete a preliminary analysis of a performance problem to develop an initial outline of a project.
  - Adhere to the rules of grammar, usage, and mechanics.

u02d1 - Write Your Discussion Post

Peer Review: Kick-Off Interview

Your second assignment, Kick-Off Interview, is due next week. For this discussion, carefully review the Week 3 assignment instructions and complete the following:

1. Conduct an interview with a high-level executive in the organization you have targeted for your project. This person should be familiar with the issue you are studying. Explore the issue from several angles using the questions in Chapters 3 and 4 of the *First Things Fast* e-book as a guide. The interview has two purposes:
   1. To explain the purpose of your needs assessment project. Your goal is to gain that person's support for the project. (You need to have buy-in from key executive staff to conduct your proposed needs assessment.)
   2. To solicit that person's key insights, facts, and opinions about the nature and causes of the issue you are investigating. The interviewee's answers should help you explore and understand the issue under study. (You need a starting point to determine the next research steps in your needs assessment. This is an opportunity to gather needed information and determine what further information is necessary.)

2. Summarize the interview findings in a report after reviewing the Week 3 assignment instructions.
3. Post a complete draft of the report in this discussion so that you can receive feedback from your peers.
4. Provide helpful and constructive feedback for two of your peers to help them improve their drafts.

Respond to Your Peers

After you have posted a complete draft of the assignment to this discussion, review the drafts of two of your fellow learners and provide constructive feedback that might help them improve their drafts next week before they submit their assignments to be graded.

Refer to the assignment scoring guide when making your suggestions and cite the grading criteria when appropriate. Review the Discussion Participation Scoring Guide to learn how the instructor will evaluate your discussion participation.

Note: After you receive and consider feedback from your peers, you will incorporate the changes you judge appropriate and submit the revised assignment for a grade next week.

Course Resources

Graduate Discussion Participation Scoring Guide

u02d2 - Write Your Discussion Post

Rossett (2009) describes barriers to conducting comprehensive organizational needs assessments (performance analyses). Based on your readings and your own experiences, describe a scenario where a training or non-training solution was implemented without the benefit of thorough upfront investigation into the causes of the problem, which a proper needs assessment requires. Make specific references to best practices principles and procedures from your readings when you answer the following questions:

- Why were needs assessment best practices not employed?
- What was the result?
- How would conducting a proper needs assessment have influenced the results?

If possible, select a scenario that could be related to the organization you will address in your course project.

Respond to Your Peers

Respond to the post of two other learners with clear writing, using proper grammar, spelling, and APA formatting. Make sure your responses are substantive; integrate course readings to support key points and analysis. Discuss if your experiences have been similar to your peers. Do you agree or disagree with your peers' perspectives when best practices were omitted? Explain your answer.

Read the Discussion Participation Scoring Guide to learn how the instructor will evaluate your discussion participation.

Reference

Rossett, A. (2009). *First things fast: A handbook for performance analysis* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Pfeiffer.

Course Resources

Graduate Discussion Participation Scoring Guide

Unit 3 ≫ Research Methods

 Introduction

Collecting Data

A school principal is trying to find out why teachers are not using classroom technologies very often. A supervisor can often guess why a performance problem is occurring, but until there are data and detailed information from those who know the reasons, a guess is still just a guess. In this case, the principal needs to come up with a plan to get data from the teachers and technology staff about what might be preventing the use of technology in the classrooms more often.

At this point in the course, you have uncovered some issues that require additional attention, as illuminated by the company executive you interviewed. You have also explored examples of assessments that did not meet expectations of success. Understandably, this early in the data gathering process, the existing ambiguity can lead to frustration and feelings of being overwhelmed. What do you do? Concentrate on getting your data.

This week, you will review the advantages and disadvantages of surveys, interviews, observations, process mapping, and focus groups.

To-Do List:

- **Assignment**: Revise and submit this week's assignment, Kick-Off Interview, for a grade.
- **Discussion**: Draft and submit next week's assignment, Research Methods, for peer review.
- **Discussion**: Discuss assessment research tools with your fellow learners.
- **What You Need to Know**: Read about research methods you can employ in your course project.

Learning Activities

u03s1 - Activity Overviews

Assignment Overview

For this week's assignment, Kick-Off Interview, you will conduct an interview with a high-level executive in the organization you have selected for your course project and summarize the interview findings in a report.

Discussion Overview

Peer Review

Post a complete draft of next week's assignment, Research Methods, so that you can receive feedback from your peers. Provide helpful and constructive feedback for two of your peers to help them improve their drafts.

Assessment Research Tools

Discuss assessment research tools with your fellow learners.

u03s2 - What You Need to Know

Collecting Accurate Data

The resources and activities this week focus on collecting data and mastering the tools you can use to gather the information necessary to effectively address the issues at hand. You will explore questions such as:

1. What information do I really need to gather?
2. Whose perspective should I include?
3. Which data collection tools are most appropriate?

Research Methods

Collecting the most appropriate information about the causes of the organizational problem you are studying is vital. Rossett (2009) and Sleezer, Russ-Eft, and Gupta (2014) offer valuable insights into how to conduct real-world research asking the right questions from the right participants and done at the right time. This week's readings provide more details on different kinds of research methods you may choose to employ.

Use the Capella library to read the following:

- Rossett, A. (2009). _First things fast: A handbook for performance analysis_ (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Pfeiffer.
    - Part of Chapter 6, "Communicating to Gather Information and Support," pages 113–126.
    - Chapter 9, "Tales From the Trenches," pages 203–239.

- Sleezer, C. M., Russ-Eft, D. F., & Gupta, K. (2014). _A practical guide to needs assessment_ (3rd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Wiley.
    - Chapter 3, "Strategies for Collecting and Analyzing Data," pages 51–85.

- Rothwell, W. J. (2004). _Beyond training and development: The groundbreaking classic on human performance enhancement_ (2nd. ed.). New York, NY: AMACOM.
  - Chapter 4, "Analyzing What Is Happening," pages 85–104.
    - This chapter offers more approaches to research.

Research Guidelines

Listen to Real-World Research to hear Dr. Charlotte Redden discuss guidelines for conducting research.

Selecting Research Methods

Each of the following articles present a different research method. Select and read at least two that methods you plan to integrate into your course project.

- _Designing structured interviews for educational research_ [PDF]. (1997). _Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation, 5_(12).
- Grudens-Schuck, N., Allen, B. L. & Larson, K. (2004). _Focus group fundamentals_ [PDF]. Available from http://www.extension.iastate.edu
- Marrelli, A. F. (2004). The performance technologist's toolbox: Surveys. _Performance Improvement_, _43_(10), 38–43.
- Marrelli, A. F. (2005). The performance technologist's toolbox: Observations. _Performance Improvement, 44_(2), 39–43.
- Marrelli, A. F. (2005). The performance technologist's toolbox: Process mapping. _Performance Improvement, 44_(5), 40–44.

u03a1 - Kick-Off Interview

Overview

This assignment is the second in a series of eight assignments that culminates in your final project, Needs Assessment:

- Week 2: Needs Assessment Issue Selection.
- **_Week 3: Kick-Off Interview._**
- Week 4: Research Methods.
- Week 5: Gap Analysis.
- Week 6: Cause Map.
- Week 7: Job Task Analysis.
- Week 8: Presentation of Research Findings.
- Week 10: Needs Assessment.

For this assignment, you will conduct an interview with a high-level executive in the organization you have targeted for your project and summarize the interview findings in a report. This person should be familiar with the issue you are studying. Explore the issue from several angles using the questions in Chapters 3 and 4 of the _First Things Fast_ e-book as a guide. The interview has two purposes:

1. To explain the purpose of your needs assessment project. Your goal is to gain that person's support for the project. (You need to have buy-in from key executive staff to conduct your proposed needs assessment.)
2. To solicit that person's key insights, facts, and opinions about the nature and causes of the issue you are investigating. The interviewee's answers should help you explore and understand the issue under study. (You need a starting point to determine the next research steps in your needs assessment. This is an opportunity to gather needed information and determine what further information is necessary.)

Instructions

In last week's discussion, you conducted the kick-off interview with your client. Revise the report you submitted for that discussion by integrating the peer and instructor feedback you received. In your report:

1. Describe a performance issue in an organizational system.
   - Describe the performance problem you identified in the Needs Assessment Issue Selection assignment in Week 2.

2. Describe interview results, including the nature and causes of the performance issue.
   - Identify the role of the person you interviewed in relation to the problem you have selected to study.
   - Be sure the results are from the perspective of the key executive you interviewed.
   - Summarize the causes of the problem as identified by the executive.

3. Explain how the permission and support of a key executive was secured to conduct a needs assessment.
   - Confirm that the key executive provided permission for you to conduct data collection techniques such as surveys, interviews, focus groups, interactive observation, and/or process mapping.

4.   Explain how an executive interview can inform further research regarding an organizational performance issue.
     ◦   What new questions or insights came out of the interview?

5.   Communicate in a manner that is scholarly, professional, and consistent with expectations for members in a professional context.

Additional Requirements

Your assignment should also meet the following requirements:

- **APA format**: The body of narrative, references, and citations should be formatted according to current APA style and formatting guidelines.
- **Font and font size**: Times New Roman, 12 point.

Note: Your instructor may use the Writing Feedback Tool when grading this assignment. The Writing Feedback Tool is designed to provide you with guidance and resources to develop your writing based on five core skills. You will find writing feedback in the Scoring Guide for the assignment, once your work has been evaluated. Learn more about the Writing Feedback Tool on the course Tools and Resources page.

Competencies Measured

By successfully completing this assignment, you will demonstrate your proficiency in the following course competencies:

- Competency 1: Diagnose performance issues in organizational systems.
     ◦   Describe a performance issue in an organizational system.

- Competency 2: Employ appropriate research and investigation methods.
     ◦   Describe interview results, including the nature and causes of the performance issue.
     ◦   Explain how an executive interview can inform further research regarding an organizational performance issue.

- Competency 4: Consult with internal entities to improve performance.
     ◦   Explain how the permission and support of a key executive was secured to conduct a needs assessment.

- Competency 5: Communicate clearly and effectively.
     ◦   Communicate in a manner that is scholarly, professional, and consistent with expectations for members in a professional context.

u03d1 - Write Your Discussion Post

Peer Review: Research Methods

Your third assignment, Research Methods, is due next week. For this discussion, carefully review the Week 4 assignment instructions and complete the following:

- Attach a complete draft of the assignment (including a narrative and associated data collection instruments) so that you can receive feedback from your peers.
- Provide helpful and constructive feedback for two of your peers to help them improve their drafts.

Respond to Your Peers

After you have posted a complete draft of the assignment to the discussion board, review the drafts of two of your fellow learners and provide constructive feedback that might help them improve their drafts next week before they submit their assignments to be graded.

Refer to the assignment scoring guide when making your suggestions and cite the grading criteria when appropriate. Review the Discussion Participation Scoring Guide to learn how the instructor will evaluate your discussion participation.

Note: After you receive and consider feedback from your peers, you will incorporate the changes you judge appropriate and submit the revised assignment for a grade next week.

Course Resources

Graduate Discussion Participation Scoring Guide

u03d2 - Write Your Discussion Post

Chapter 9 of your *First Things Fast* e-book describes a number of thought-provoking cases. Choose one case and post a sample of an assessment research tool that could have been used to avoid the described pitfalls. For example, develop a survey, interview questions, or focus group questions that, if administered in the planning stages, would have uncovered the problems at an earlier stage. You should create this tool yourself, rather than using an existing one.

Attach the tool to this discussion. In your post, discuss which case study you selected and the reasons why you chose to develop the research tool that you did.

Respond to Your Peers

Respond to the post of two other learners with clear writing, using proper grammar, spelling, and APA formatting. Make sure your responses are substantive; integrate course readings to support key points and analysis. Considering the case studies the learners selected, do the tools they developed reveal the problems efficiently? Explain why or why not. Discuss considerations to be included or deleted from the tools, and explain how these changes would enhance the tool.

Read the Discussion Participation Scoring Guide to learn how the instructor will evaluate your discussion participation.

Course Resources

Graduate Discussion Participation Scoring Guide

Unit 4 ›› Gap Analysis

 Introduction

Looking for the Performance Gaps

A laboratory technician is concerned that too many errors are occurring in setting up their experiments. There seem to be a variety of reasons for the problem, but more information is required to know where and why some performance gaps exist. The goal at this point is to find what should be happening when setting up the experiments versus what is actually happening.

When assessing performance, it is essential to identify the gap between *what is* and *what is desired*.

This week, you will focus on gap analysis and explore a documentation tool that will become central to your course project.

To-Do List:

- **Assignment**: Revise and submit this week's assignment, Research Methods, for a grade.
- **Discussion**: Draft and submit next week's assignment, Gap Analysis, for peer review.
- **Discussion**: Discuss the importance and application of existing data in your needs assessment project.
- **What You Need to Know**: Read about the role of gap analysis in needs assessment.

Learning Activities

u04s1 - Activity Overviews

Assignment Overview

For this week's assignment, Research Methods, you will draft a narrative that explains at least two research methods you will employ to gather data for the needs assessment. You will also design the research instruments to collect the data from the targeted groups.

Discussion Overview

Peer Review

Post a complete draft of next week's assignment, Gap Analysis, so that you can receive feedback from your peers. Provide helpful and constructive feedback for two of your peers to help them improve their drafts.

Existing Data

Discuss the importance and application of existing data in your course project.

u04s2 - What You Need to Know

Gap Analysis

It is appropriate for you to *mind the gap* as you focus on needs assessment. The gap is the space between where a certain performance is and where the performance *should be*. Gap analysis strives to define and specify the details of the existing gaps.

Use the Capella library to read the following;

- Robinson, D. G., Robinson, J. C., Phillips, J. J., Phillips, P. P., & Handshaw, D. (2015). *Performance consulting: A strategic process to improve, measure, and sustain organizational results* (3rd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.
  - Chapter 7, "Assess the IS," pages 119–138.
    - This chapter will help you assess the current state of organizational performance.
- Rothwell, W. J. (2004). *Beyond training and development: The groundbreaking classic on human performance enhancement* (2nd. ed.). New York, NY: AMACOM.
  - Chapter 5, "Envisioning What Should Be Happening," pages 105–122.
  - Chapter 6 "Clarifying Present and Future Performance Gaps," pages 125–136.

Needs Assessment Models

Kaufman is a well-known HPI theorist who presents one of the five needs assessment models we will focus on in this course. Read the following chapter from *Strategic Planning Plus*, where he discusses needs assessment:

- Kaufman, R. (1992). *Strategic planning plus: An organizational guide*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
  - Chapter 5, "The Rationale for Needs Assessment: Identifying Problems Based on Needs," pages 85–107.

u04a1 - Research Methods

Overview

This assignment is the third in a series of eight assignments that culminates in your final project, Needs Assessment:

- Week 2: Needs Assessment Issue Selection.
- Week 3: Kick-Off Interview.
- *Week 4: Research Methods.*
- Week 5: Gap Analysis.
- Week 6: Cause Map.
- Week 7: Job Task Analysis.
- Week 8: Presentation of Research Findings.
- Week 10: Needs Assessment.

The *First Things Fast* e-book and additional readings describe a number of assessment methods to gather data, such as surveys, interviews, focus groups, process mapping, and workplace observations. In this assignment, you will draft a narrative that explains at least two research methods you will

employ to gather data for the needs assessment and detail related aspects of the process. You will also design the research instruments to collect the necessary information from the targeted group, or groups, or determine processes for the needs assessment.

Note: Do not select document review, data mining, or observation of data as a research method, because those research methods are covered in a future assignment. Also note that the kick-off interview was part of the problem definition activity and is not a substitute for one of your research methods for this assignment.

Instructions

Revise the Research Methods narrative that you posted in last week's peer-review discussion by incorporating the peer and instructor feedback. In your narrative:

1. Describe a performance issue in an organizational system.
   - Identify the performance issue in a one-sentence statement problem statement.
   - Provide relevant context to indicate significance of the performance issue.

2. Identify research methods that are effective for the associated needs assessment.
   - *Do not* select document review, data mining, or observation of data as research methods, because they are covered in a future assignment.
   - *Do not* select the kick-off interview as a research method, since it was part of the problem definition activity.
   - Choose at least two research methods from the following list that you will employ to gather data for the course project:
     - Interview.
     - Survey.
     - Focus group.
     - Process mapping.
     - Interactive observation. (Think aloud.)

   - Select viable research methods that can be conducted efficiently in the setting where the problem is located.
   - Explain the appropriateness of the selected research methods, given the context of the associated needs assessment.

3. Describe the advantages and disadvantages of selected research methods.
4. Design appropriate data collection instruments.
   - Design and present (for each research method you selected) a draft of the data collection instruments you will use, such as survey questions, interview questions, focus group questions, observations protocol questions, or a draft of a process map.
   - Ensure each tool is focused on determining the causes of the problem, not the effects of the problem. Be sure to ask participants directly why this problem is happening.
   - Ensure your research consider both qualitative and quantitative methods since key information may be uncovered from either or both methods.
   - Explain the design and purpose of data collection instruments that support selected research methodologies.

5. Explain the implementation of selected research instruments.
   - Explain your plan for conducting the research methods.
     - If you will conduct interviews, how many will you conduct? How will you choose interviewees?
     - If you will conduct surveys, how will you choose people to do the surveys? When and how will you deliver the surveys?
     - If you do process mapping, how will you identify the problems in the current organizational process? (If you find that your performance issue does not involve a process, you will select another instrument.)
     - If you do a focus group, will it be in-person or virtual? How will you select participants?
     - If you conduct observations, who and what will you observe? Where? For most research talking with those observed either during or debriefing after each observed event provides the best opportunity for understanding why a problem is occurring.

6. Organize content so ideas flow logically with smooth transitions.

Additional Requirements

Your assignment should also meet the following requirements:

- **Written communication**: Written communication should be scholarly, professional, and consistent with expectations in a professional context.
- **APA format**: The body of narrative, references, and citations should be formatted according to current APA style and formatting guidelines.
- **Font and font size**: Times New Roman, 12 point.

Note: Your instructor may use the Writing Feedback Tool when grading this assignment. The Writing Feedback Tool is designed to provide you with guidance and resources to develop your writing based on five core skills. You will find writing feedback in the Scoring Guide for the assignment, once your work has been evaluated. Learn more about the Writing Feedback Tool on the course Tools and Resources page.

Competencies Measured

By successfully completing this assignment, you will demonstrate your proficiency in the following course competencies:

- Competency 1: Diagnose performance issues in organizational systems.

- ◦ Describe a performance issue in an organizational system.

- Competency 2: Employ appropriate research and investigation methods.
  - ◦ Identify research methods that are effective for the associated needs assessment.
  - ◦ Describe the advantages and disadvantages of selected research methods.
  - ◦ Design appropriate data collection instruments.
  - ◦ Explain the implementation of selected research instruments.

- Competency 5: Communicate clearly and effectively.
  - ◦ Organize content so ideas flow logically with smooth transitions.

u04d1 - Write Your Discussion Post

Peer Review: Gap Analysis

Your fourth assignment, Gap Analysis, is due next week. For this discussion, carefully review the Week 5 assignment instructions before you do the following:

- Complete the Gap Analysis Worksheet [DOC].
- Draft a narrative where you discuss how you can use the Gap Analysis Worksheet as your project progresses.
- Attach a complete draft of the assignment (both the Gap Analysis Worksheet and the narrative) to this discussion so that you can receive feedback from your peers.
- Provide helpful and constructive feedback for two of your peers to help them improve their drafts.

Respond to Your Peers

After you have posted a complete draft of the assignment to the discussion board, review the drafts of two of your fellow learners and provide constructive feedback that might help them improve their drafts next week before they submit their assignments to be graded.

Refer to the assignment scoring guide when making your suggestions and cite the grading criteria when appropriate. Review the Discussion Participation Scoring Guide to learn how the instructor will evaluate your discussion participation.

Note: After you receive and consider feedback from your peers, you will incorporate the changes you judge appropriate and submit the revised assignment for a grade next week.

Course Resources

Graduate Discussion Participation Scoring Guide

u04d2 - Write Your Discussion Post

Data and documents that already exist can add valuable information to the needs assessment process. Such sources might include job descriptions, sales data, mission statements, personnel records, customer complaints, budgets, or other sources. Using existing data is sometimes called data mining or observing existing documents.

Note that you should:

1. Consider the findings from existing data and documents when creating further course assignments.
2. Include the findings from existing data and documents in your final paper.

For this discussion, address the following:

- What is the problem you are investigating for your project? State the problem in no more than one sentence.
- What types of existing data and documents do you plan to use in the development of your final project?
- Why did you select these?
- Will they be readily available?

- How will you use these items?

Respond to Your Peers

Respond to the post of two other learners with clear writing, using proper grammar, spelling, and APA formatting. Make sure your responses are substantive; integrate course readings to support key points and analysis. Are there additional existing data sources you could suggest to your peers? If so, explain the data and why it would add value to the needs assessment.

Read the Discussion Participation Scoring Guide to learn how the instructor will evaluate your discussion participation.

Course Resources

Graduate Discussion Participation Scoring Guide

Unit 5 ≫ Cause Map

Introduction

Finding the Causes of Performance Gaps

A construction manager has to determine why costs are consistently over budget. While some project managers blame the construction crews for waste and required re-work, a careful cause analysis determines that there may be many other factors more responsible for the cost overruns. In the first place, it seems that many projects at the company are being underbid.

The overarching goals of the business drive the type of assessment. This week, you will explore the differences between strategic needs assessment and competency-based assessment. You will also investigate cause analysis from a systems approach, view presentations, and experiment with cause mapping.

To-Do List:

- **Assignment**: Revise and submit this week's assignment, Gap Analysis, for a grade.
- **Discussion**: Draft and submit next week's assignment, Cause Map, for peer review.
- **Discussion**: Discuss strategic needs assessment versus competency-based assessment with your fellow learners.
- **What You Need to Know**: Read about the role of cause mapping in needs assessment, and review critical resources to help you make your own cause map.
- **Prepare**: Continue research for your course project based on the plan you outlined in the Research Methods assignment.

Learning Activities

u05s1 - Activity Overviews

Assignment Overview

For this week's assignment, Gap Analysis, you will complete the Gap Analysis Worksheet and draft a narrative where you discuss how you can use this worksheet as your needs assessment project progresses.

Discussion Overview

Peer Review

Post a complete draft of next week's assignment, Cause Map, so that you can receive feedback from your peers. Provide helpful and constructive feedback for two of your peers to help them improve their drafts.

Assessment Comparison

Discuss strategic needs assessment versus competency-based assessment with your fellow learners.

u05s2 - What You Need to Know

Cause Mapping

Cause mapping provides an effective means to do systems thinking in a powerful way. The cause map can be used at all levels within an organization, and graphically demonstrates cause-and-effect relationships surrounding any problem. It is a powerful problem-solving tool that can also be used with individuals or groups. View the Cause Map Sample media to see a sample cause map as a model for your own.

You will create a cause map, similar to the example shown, to illustrate the business issues targeted in your needs assessment course project. We will employ the cause mapping process created by Thinkreliability to show the cause and effect linkages to the core problem you have selected to study.

To prepare to create your own cause map, view the following:

- CauseMapping. (2009, May 17). _Root cause analysis - Titanic_ [Video] | Transcript. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GOVeO5_0qD0
    ◦ **Note**: This video is critical to completing your Cause Map assignment.
- Cause Map Tutorial.
    ◦ This media offers a demonstration that will help you create your cause map.
        ▪ You will create your cause map in Excel using the Cause Map Template [XLS], which is based on one designed by ThinkReliability. For more information, visit the ThinkReliability website.
            ▪ ThinkReliability. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.thinkreliability.com/

Use the Capella library to read the following:

- Rooney, J. J., & Vanden Houvel, L. N. (2004). Root cause analysis for beginners. _Quality Progress, 37_(7), 45–53.
- Gilbert, T. F. (1996). _Human competence: Engineering worthy performance_ (Tribute ed.). Silver Spring, MD: International Society for Performance Management.
    ◦ Chapter 5, "Troubleshooting Performance."
- Rothwell, W. J. (2013). _Performance consulting: Applying performance improvement in human resource development_. Somerset, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
    ◦ Chapter 8, "Identifying the Root Causes of Performance Gaps."

Strategic Needs Assessment and Competency-Based Assessment

Chapter 6 of the _A Practical Guide to Needs Assessment_ e-book discusses competency-based needs assessment, which is appropriate when competencies need to be identified or guidelines need to be established for personnel issues such as recruiting, hiring, and promoting. Chapter 7 discusses strategic needs assessments. These assessments are applicable when performance improvement must be connected to a specific business strategy, is part of a long-term performance improvement plan, or is a diagnosis of the value of individual processes that need to be completed. You will determine which of these strategies (or both) would be most appropriate in your course project:

- Sleezer, C. M., Russ-Eft, D. F., & Gupta, K. (2014). _A practical guide to needs assessment_ (3rd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Wiley.
    ◦ Chapter 6, "Competency-based Needs Assessment," pages 145–171.
    ◦ Chapter 7, "Strategic Needs Assessment," pages 173–203.

u05s3 - Prepare: Continue Research

Continue your research for the course project based on the plan you outlined in the Research Methods assignment.

u05a1 - Gap Analysis

Overview

This assignment is the fourth in a series of eight assignments that culminates in your final project, Needs Assessment:

- Week 2: Needs Assessment Issue Selection.
- Week 3: Kick-Off Interview.
- Week 4: Research Methods.
- *Week 5: Gap Analysis.*
- Week 6: Cause Map.
- Week 7: Job Task Analysis.
- Week 8: Presentation of Research Findings.
- Week 10: Needs Assessment.

For this assignment, you will complete the Gap Analysis Worksheet [DOC] and draft a narrative where you discuss how you can use this worksheet as your course project progresses. For instance, how does this gap analysis impact your further research?

Instructions

Revise the Gap Analysis draft that you submitted in last week's peer-review discussion. In the revised Gap Analysis Worksheet and associated narrative, complete the following:

1. Identify functions or activities where performance gaps exist.
   - Use the information obtained from your ongoing original research and review of existing data and documents.
   - Include not only any gaps that state the problem itself, but also those that contribute to causing the problem.
   - Note that gaps may be identified with numeric values or verbal descriptions depending on the nature of each gap itself.
   - Use a separate row for each gap.
   - Note that gaps may be described in either qualitative or quantitative terms—neither is superior.

2. Contrast the current performance of specific elements in an organization with their expected performance.
   - Elements in the system may be activities, functions, or processes related to the problem or the causes of that problem.
   - Be sure you are recommending solutions rather than identifying existing performance gaps.

3. Describe the effect of the performance gaps on the organization.
   - Consider each gap separately and state how it negatively affects or could affect the organization.

4. Discuss the impact of a gap analysis on the selected needs analysis project.
   - State the problem you are investigating in exactly one sentence.
   - Create a narrative explaining how you can use the Gap Analysis Worksheet as your course project progresses.
     - For instance, how does this gap analysis impact your further ongoing research?

5. Communicate in a manner that is scholarly, professional, and consistent with expectations for members in a professional context.

Additional Requirements

In addition to the requirements outlined above, your assignment should meet the following:

- **APA format**: The body of narrative, references, and citations should be formatted according to current APA style and formatting guidelines.
- **Font and font size**: Times New Roman, 12 point.

Note: Your instructor may use the Writing Feedback Tool when grading this assignment. The Writing Feedback Tool is designed to provide you with guidance and resources to develop your writing based on five core skills. You will find writing feedback in the Scoring Guide for the assignment, once your work has been evaluated. Learn more about the Writing Feedback Tool on the course Tools and Resources page.

Competencies Measured

By successfully completing this assignment, you will demonstrate your proficiency in the following course competencies:

- Competency 1: Diagnose performance issues in organizational systems.
  - Identify functions or activities where performance gaps exist.
  - Contrast the current performance of specific elements in an organization with their expected performance.
  - Describe the effect of the performance gaps on the organization.

- Competency 2: Employ appropriate research and investigation methods.
  - Discuss the impact of a gap analysis on the selected needs analysis project.

- Competency 5: Communicate clearly and effectively.
  - Communicate in a manner that is scholarly, professional, and consistent with expectations for members in a professional context.

u05d1 - Write Your Discussion Post

Peer Review: Cause Map

Your fifth assignment, Cause Map, is due next week. For the assignment, you will create a cause map and a narrative about the cause map. To create the cause map, you will use an Excel template based on a design by ThinkReliability, explained in the Root Cause Analysis - Titanic | Transcript video. More details about the narrative are available in the Week 6 assignment instructions.

For this discussion, carefully review the Week 6 assignment instructions before you do the following:

- Review the Cause Map Sample media.
- Review the Cause Map Tutorial media.
- Complete the Cause Map Template [XLS].
- Complete the narrative about the cause map.
- Attach a complete draft of the assignment (both the cause map and the narrative) to this discussion so that you can receive feedback from your peers.
- Provide helpful and constructive feedback for two of your peers to help them improve their drafts.

Respond to Your Peers

After you have posted a complete draft of the assignment to the discussion board, review the drafts of two of your fellow learners and provide constructive feedback that might help them improve their drafts next week before they submit their assignments to be graded.

Refer to the assignment scoring guide when making your suggestions and cite the grading criteria when appropriate. Review the Discussion Participation Scoring Guide to learn how the instructor will evaluate your discussion participation.

Note: After you receive and consider feedback from your peers, you will incorporate the changes you judge appropriate and submit the revised assignment for a grade next week.

Course Resources

Graduate Discussion Participation Scoring Guide

u05d2 - Write Your Discussion Post

In your own words, compare strategic needs assessment with competency-based assessment. State the problem you are investigating in one sentence. Then explain why one or the other, or both assessment types, are most appropriate for your final project. What aspects of the assessments do you think are most worth exploring in relation to your particular performance issue?

Respond to Your Peers

Respond to the post of two other learners with clear writing, using proper grammar, spelling, and APA formatting. Make sure your responses are substantive; integrate course readings to support key points and analysis. Do you agree with the specific aspects or recommend different aspects to be explored in relation to the performance issue?

Read the Discussion Participation Scoring Guide to learn how the instructor will evaluate your discussion participation.

Course Resources

Graduate Discussion Participation Scoring Guide

Introduction

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Analyzing Job Tasks

Electrical service to new houses was taking too long. A JTA showed that electrical line workers were sometimes sent to incorrect addresses, or to locations where the main equipment was not yet operational. The study of slow electrical connections and other logistical issues that impact a job role demonstrates the importance of analyzing the worksite conditions and not only the knowledge and skills of the workers.

</div>

This week, you will research JTA and its importance in T&PI initiatives. It is impossible to conduct a performance analysis and design an appropriate intervention that affects performance if you do not clearly understand the job tasks and the desired standards of performance.

To-Do List:

- **Assignment**: Revise and submit this week's assignment, Cause Map, for a grade.
- **Discussion**: Draft and submit next week's assignment, Job Task Analysis, for peer review.
- **Discussion**: Discuss a scholarly article that will be useful for your course project.
- **What You Need to Know**: Read about the role of JTA in the needs assessment process.
- **Prepare**: Continue your research for the course project based on the plan you outlined in the Research Methods assignment.

Learning Activities

u06s1 - Activity Overviews

Assignment Overview

For this week's assignment, Cause Map, you will create a cause map and draft a narrative about the cause map. This assignment includes several critical resources designed to help you create your cause map.

Discussion Overview

Peer Review

Post a complete draft of next week's assignment, Job Task Analysis, so that you can receive feedback from your peers. Provide helpful and constructive feedback for two of your peers to help them improve their drafts.

Project-Related Article

Discuss a scholarly article that will be useful for your course project.

u06s2 - What You Need to Know

Job Task Analysis

JTA is essential to many training and performance improvement functions. You will find yourself in situations where a JTA may be required. Therefore, it is important to be prepared and understand the strategy and procedures of JTA.

JTA lists the essential knowledge, skills, and abilities of the individuals being studied, and the desired standards of performance for those individuals. Compensation, duties, and training needs are often decided based on a well-developed task analysis. You will investigate a list of questions that can be used to formulate the task analysis. Please keep in mind that a task analysis can often lead to a non-training intervention.

Use the Capella library to read the following to learn more about the relationship between job roles and job tasks:

- Sleezer, C. M., Russ-Eft, D. F., & Gupta, K. (2014). *A practical guide to needs assessment* (3rd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Wiley.
  ◦ Chapter 5, "Job and Task Analysis," pages 117–143.

Use the Internet to review the following:

- Wechsler, L. (2017). The art of job task analysis. Retrieved from https://www.omep.org/the-art-of-job-task-analysis/

Rummler and Brache's model is widely employed in HPI studies. Theirs is one of the five models you will explore in this course. Use the Capella library to read the following:

- Rummler, G. A., & Brache, A. P. (2012). *Improving performance: How to manage the white space on the organization chart* (3rd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
  ◦ Chapter 2, "Three Levels of Performance: Organization, Process, and Job/Performer," pages 12–26.

u06s3 - Prepare: Project Presentation

Continue your research for the course project based on the plan you outlined in the Research Methods assignment.

You will present the first draft of your research results during the Week 7 peer-review discussion for the Week 8 assignment, Presentation of Research Findings.

u06a1 - Cause Map

Overview

This assignment is the fifth in a series of eight assignments that culminates in your final project, Needs Assessment:

- Week 2: Needs Assessment Issue Selection.
- Week 3: Kick-Off Interview.
- Week 4: Research Methods.
- Week 5: Gap Analysis.
- *Week 6: Cause Map.*
- Week 7: Job Task Analysis.
- Week 8: Presentation of Research Findings.
- Week 10: Needs Assessment.

For the assignment, you will create a cause map and draft a narrative about the cause map. To create the cause map, you will use an Excel template based on a design by ThinkReliability.

Instructions

Before you continue, review the following resources:

- Root Cause Analysis - Titanic | Transcript.
- Cause Map Sample.
- Cause Map Tutorial.
- Cause Map Template [XLS].

Revise the Cause Map and narrative that you submitted for peer review in last week's discussion. In your cause map and associated narrative, complete the following:

1. Create a cause map that clearly identifies cause and effect.
   ◦ Create the cause map as an Excel document. Use the Cause Map Template [XLS].
   ◦ Focus entirely on all the causes of the problem. Do not include solutions or results of the problem.
   ◦ Note that each direct cause of the problem may also have one or more causes itself.

2. Describe the organizational problem being studied.
   ◦ Provide relevant context to indicate significance of the organizational problem.
   ◦ Describe the organizational problem in a one-sentence statement problem statement.

3. Describe preparatory work to be completed before creating the cause map.
   ◦ Identify the resources you used and the process you followed to create the map.

4. Describe the contents of the cause map associated with the selected needs assessment project.
5. Describe the overall impact of a cause map on the selected needs assessment project.
6. Communicate in a manner that is scholarly, professional, and consistent with expectations for members in a professional context.

Additional Requirements

Your assignment should also meet the following:

- **APA format**: The body of narrative, references, and citations should be formatted according to current APA style and formatting guidelines.
- **Font and font size**: Times New Roman, 12 point.

Note: Your instructor may use the Writing Feedback Tool when grading this assignment. The Writing Feedback Tool is designed to provide you with guidance and resources to develop your writing based on five core skills. You will find writing feedback in the Scoring Guide for the assignment, once your work has been evaluated. Learn more about the Writing Feedback Tool on the course Tools and Resources page.

Competencies Measured

By successfully completing this assignment, you will demonstrate your proficiency in the following course competencies:

- Competency 1: Diagnose performance issues in organizational systems.
  ◦ Describe preparatory work to be completed before creating a cause map.

- Competency 2: Employ appropriate research and investigation methods.
  ◦ Create a cause map that clearly identifies cause and effect.
  ◦ Describe the organizational problem being studied.
  ◦ Describe the contents of the cause map associated with the selected needs assessment project.
  ◦ Describe the overall impact of a cause map on the selected needs assessment project.

- Competency 5: Communicate clearly and effectively.
  ◦ Communicate in a manner that is scholarly, professional, and consistent with expectations for members in a professional context.

u06d1 - Write Your Discussion Post

Peer Review: Job Task Analysis

Your sixth assignment, Job Task Analysis, is due next week. For this discussion, carefully review the Week 7 assignment instructions before you do the following:

- Complete Toolkit Form 5.2 [DOC] or Toolkit Form 5.3 [DOC].
- Complete a JTA narrative.
- Attach a complete draft of the assignment (the JTA narrative and toolkit form) to this discussion so that you can receive feedback from your peers.
- Provide helpful and constructive feedback for two of your peers to help them improve their drafts.

Respond to Your Peers

After you have posted a complete draft of the assignment to the discussion board, review the drafts of two of your fellow learners and provide constructive feedback that might help them improve their drafts next week before they submit their assignments to be graded.

Refer to the assignment scoring guide when making your suggestions and cite the grading criteria when appropriate. Review the Discussion Participation Scoring Guide to learn how the instructor will evaluate your discussion participation.

Note: After you receive and consider feedback from your peers, you will incorporate the changes you judge appropriate and submit the revised assignment for a grade next week.

Course Resources

Graduate Discussion Participation Scoring Guide

u06d2 - Write Your Discussion Post

Using the Capella library, Internet resources, and/or the *First Things Fast* e-book (pages 261–268), locate a scholarly article that will be useful for your course project. The resource does *not* have to be from the list in the *First Things Fast* e-book.

See Tour the Library, your Education Library Research Guide, or Library Help for support completing this step.

For this discussion, state your project's focus in one sentence. Then summarize the article's content in one paragraph, and specifically describe how it will strengthen your course project. Include the full URL, if any, and an APA-formatted reference of your article in your response.

Respond to Your Peers

Respond to the post of two other learners with clear writing, using proper grammar, spelling, and APA formatting. Make sure your responses are substantive; integrate course readings to support key points and analysis. What additional resources can you recommend that would benefit your peers' project? Explain your response.

Read the Discussion Participation Scoring Guide to learn how the instructor will evaluate your discussion participation.

Course Resources

Graduate Discussion Participation Scoring Guide

Unit 7 ⟫ Presentation of Research Findings

 Introduction

Analyzing Data

The lead trainer for a military unit holds interviews and a focus group with training instructors about the lack of updated training materials. After compiling the results, the lead trainer needs to analyze the raw data in ways that answer the key questions that led to the needs assessment in the first place. Creating themes, finding commonalities, and identifying patterns or trends are all ways to uncover root causes of a problem.

To date, you have gathered a lot of information from a variety of sources for your project. Now it is time to synthesize what you have learned and the data you have gathered for presentation to others. Those who have supported your project and those who have been otherwise involved need to hear what your needs assessment has uncovered. There are many ways to communicate your results, and you should plan for how you will do that effectively.

As you have conducted your project and as you plan to communicate your findings to date, you also need to be cognizant of ethical considerations. Each stage in a needs assessment has its own ethical issues to keep in mind. You will reflect on this matter as you approach the end of your project.

To-Do List

- **Assignment**: Revise and submit this week's assignment, Job Task Analysis, for a grade.

- **Discussion**: Draft and submit next week's assignment, Presentation of Research Findings, for peer review.
- **Discussion**: Discuss the navigation of potential ethical issues with your fellow learners.
- **What You Need to Know**: Read about ethical issues when conducting needs assessment as well as approaches to presenting results and findings.

Learning Activities

u07s1 - Activity Overviews

Assignment Overview

For this week's assignment, Job Task Analysis, you will conduct an interview with someone whose job role is affected by the issue you are investigating. Then you will complete a toolkit form that will help you draft a JTA narrative.

Discussion Overview

Peer Review

Post a complete draft of next week's assignment, Presentation of Research Findings, so that you can receive feedback from your peers. Provide helpful and constructive feedback for two of your peers to help them improve their drafts.

Ethics Questions

Discuss the navigation of potential ethical issues with your fellow learners.

u07s2 - What You Need to Know

Presenting Results and Findings

After the research is done, it is important to know how to approach the important process of presenting and sharing what you have learned. Read the resources below to learn more.

Use the Capella library to read the following:

- Sleezer, C. M., Russ-Eft, D. F., & Gupta, K. (2014). _A practical guide to needs assessment_ (3rd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Wiley.
  ◦ Chapter 9, "Writing Proposals and Reports," pages 231–255.
- Rossett, A. (2009). _First things fast: A handbook for performance analysis_ (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Pfeiffer.
  ◦ Chapter 8, "Finding Meaning, Communicating Results," pages 167–202.

Ethical Issues

HPI practitioners must be aware of ethical principles when conducting their work which deals with individuals, issues, confidential or proprietary information, and organizational needs or opportunities. As you conduct your needs assessment you should also keep in mind these principles and practices. To learn more, use the Capella library to read the following:

- Sleezer, C. M., Russ-Eft, D. F., & Gupta, K. (2014). _A practical guide to needs assessment_ (3rd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Wiley.
  ◦ Chapter 10, "Ethical Issues," pages 257–269.

Needs Assessment Models

Richard Swanson has authored many books and articles on performance improvement. His is the fifth of the five models we will focus on in this course. Use the Capella library to read the following:

- Swanson, R. A. (2007). _Analysis for improving performance: Tools for diagnosing organizations and documenting workplace expertise_ (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.
  ◦ Chapter 4, "Concepts for Diagnosing Performance," pages 49–56.
  ◦ Chapter 5, "The Performance Diagnosis Process," pages 57–77.

u07a1 - Job Task Analysis

Overview

This assignment is the sixth in a series of eight assignments that culminates in your final project, Needs Assessment:

- Week 2: Needs Assessment Issue Selection.
- Week 3: Kick-Off Interview.
- Week 4: Research Methods.
- Week 5: Gap Analysis.
- Week 6: Cause Map.
- ***Week 7: Job Task Analysis.***
- Week 8: Presentation of Research Findings.
- Week 10: Needs Assessment.

For this assignment, you will conduct an interview with someone directly affected by the issue you are investigating in your course project. That person's answers will help you complete a JTA narrative using Toolkit Form 5.2 [DOC] or Toolkit Form 5.3 [DOC].

Instructions

Complete the following:

1. Conduct an interview with someone directly affected by the issue you are investigating.
2. Select one of the following forms and complete it (samples available on pages 132–136 of the *A Practical Guide to Needs Assessment* e-book):
    - Toolkit Form 5.2 [DOC] – Job Training and Non-Training Recommendations I (Professional/Supervisory/Management). This form also available for review on pages 320–321 of the *A Practical Guide to Needs Assessment* e-book.
    - Toolkit Form 5.3 [DOC] – Job Training and Non-Training Recommendations II (Administrative). This form also available for review on pages 322–323 of the *A Practical Guide to Needs Assessment* e-book.
3. Use the information you organize in the toolkit form to draft a JTA narrative.

With the toolkit form and the associated JTA narrative, perform the following:

1. Complete a toolkit form for an employee whose role is related to the performance issue being studied.
    - Note that "Non-Training Requirements" in the worksheet indicate elements that support the job tasks but are not related to personal training or skills. Examples include availability of data, computers, or certain key information.
    - Explain the findings in the toolkit form in the JTA narrative.

2. Describe the organizational problem being studied.
    - Describe the organizational problem in a one-sentence statement problem statement.
    - Provide relevant context to indicate significance of the organizational problem.

3. Justify the selection of a specific employee for a JTA.
    - Clearly explain how this person's job relates to the problem being investigated.

4. Explain the benefit of completing a JTA.
    - Discuss how completing the JTA benefited your needs assessment project.

5. Describe how a JTA can lead to the development of an effective non-training solution.
    - Non-training solutions do not need to be based on the non-training requirements listed in the worksheet.

6. Address all components of the assignment prompt, using the toolkit form and assignment description to structure text clearly and logically.

Additional Requirements

Your assignment should also meet the following requirements:

- **Written communication**: Written communication should be scholarly, professional, and consistent with expectations in a professional context.
- **APA format**: The body of narrative, references, and citations should be formatted according to current APA style and formatting guidelines.
- **Font and font size**: Times New Roman, 12 point.

Note: Your instructor may use the Writing Feedback Tool when grading this assignment. The Writing Feedback Tool is designed to provide you with guidance and resources to develop your writing based on five core skills. You will find writing feedback in the Scoring Guide for the assignment, once your work has been evaluated. Learn more about the Writing Feedback Tool on the course Tools and Resources page.

Competencies Measured

By successfully completing this assignment, you will demonstrate your proficiency in the following course competencies:

- Competency 1: Diagnose performance issues in organizational systems.
    - Describe the organizational problem being studied.
- Competency 3: Conduct a needs assessment.
    - Explain the benefit of completing a job task analysis.
    - Describe how a job task analysis can lead to the development of an effective non-training solution.
- Competency 4: Consult with internal entities to improve performance.
    - Justify the selection of a specific employee for a job task analysis.
    - Complete a toolkit form for an employee whose role is related to the performance issue being studied.
- Competency 5: Communicate clearly and effectively.
    - Address all components of the assignment prompt, using the toolkit form and assignment description to structure text clearly and logically.

u07d1 - Write Your Discussion Post

Peer Review: Presentation of Research Findings

Your seventh assignment, Presentation of Research Findings, is due next week.

Based on your research plan outlined in the Research Methods assignment and other activities in this course, you have collected key information using your two specific research methods plus your review of existing data. The results of your research should be available now for you to report. Now, present the data from your course research in a cumulative narrative report. Carefully review the complete assignment instructions in Week 8 for details required for this report.

For this discussion, complete the following:

- Attach a complete draft of the assignment (the cumulative narrative report) to this discussion so that you can receive feedback from your peers.
- Provide helpful and constructive feedback for two of your peers to help them improve their drafts.

Note: If not all your research is complete, state how much is done and exactly when the rest will be completed. You must include all research results in your final paper.

Respond to Your Peers

After you have posted a complete draft of the assignment to the discussion board, review the drafts of two of your fellow learners and provide constructive feedback that might help them improve their drafts next week before they submit their assignments to be graded.

Refer to the assignment scoring guide when making your suggestions and cite the grading criteria when appropriate. Review the Discussion Participation Scoring Guide to learn how the instructor will evaluate your discussion participation.

Note: After you receive and consider feedback from your peers, you will incorporate the changes you judge appropriate and submit the revised assignment for a grade next week.

Course Resources

Graduate Discussion Participation Scoring Guide

u07d2 - Write Your Discussion Post

Review the ethical issues associated with a needs assessment as described in the *A Practical Guide to Needs Assessment* e-book.

In your post:

- State the purpose of your project in a single sentence.
- Discuss your project and ethical principles that have been relevant so far.
- Explain how you addressed and applied ethical principles during your research.
- How did you handle any such specific concerns that might have arisen?

Keep in mind that this discussion is not about the ethics of the organization itself, but rather your approach to your project.

Respond to Your Peers

Respond to the post of two other learners with clear writing, using proper grammar, spelling, and APA formatting. Make sure your responses are substantive; integrate course readings to support key points and analysis.

Read the Discussion Participation Scoring Guide to learn how the instructor will evaluate your discussion participation.

Course Resources

Graduate Discussion Participation Scoring Guide

Unit 8 ≫ Foundational Models

Introduction

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Telling the Story of Research

The director of a social services agency is speaking to potential funders. Her presentation demonstrates how the agency's unmet needs have created a backlog of critical services in the community. As she describes the reasons for the service backlog, the director uses a performance model to logically relate the causes and their effects. Models can serve as effective visual and conceptual tools to facilitate communication among stakeholders.

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Readings from five pioneers of needs assessment have been included with your weekly readings: Thomas Gilbert, Roger Kaufman, Robert Mager, Geary Rummler, and Richard Swanson. To provide a theoretical basis for your final paper, you will incorporate what you have learned about their models, insights, and theories into the course project. To accomplish this, you will select the writing of the pioneer you feel is most appropriate for your project.

Remember how easy it was to jump to a solution at the start of the class? Perhaps, your needs assessment partners simply wanted a training course offered, or thought the problem was simply poor morale. You have probably found a number of causes beyond those that were assumed at the start of your needs assessment, and now can see a larger or more complex situation. As another step toward your final report, you will finally determine appropriate recommendations to address the problem you have been assessing. Your stakeholders and other interested parties are eager to learn what you recommend as the next steps or possible interventions.

To-Do List:

- **Assignment**: Revise and submit this week's assignment, Presentation of Research Findings, for a grade.
- **Discussion**: Discuss your selection of an HPT theorist whose model and research will inform the work you do with your course project.
- **Discussion**: Discuss the recommendations you are making based on the findings of your needs assessment research.
- **What You Need to Know**: Read about how needs assessment models guide both research and the presentation of findings.

Learning Activities

u08s1 - Activity Overviews

Assignment Overview

For this week's assignment, Presentation of Research Findings, you will present the data from your research in a cumulative narrative report.

Discussion Overview

HPT Models

Discuss your selection of an HPT theorist whose model and research will inform the work you do with your course project.

Course Project Final Recommendations

Discuss the recommendations you are making based on the findings of your needs assessment research.

u08s2 - What You Need to Know

Needs Assessment Models

You will select at least one of the five needs assessment models to provide foundational theory for your final course project. Before you review the five models, read the following:

- Sleezer, C. M., Russ-Eft, D. F., & Gupta, K. (2014). _A practical guide to needs assessment_ (3rd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Wiley.
    ◦ Chapter 2, "Ideas and Models That Guide Practice," pages 35–49.
        ▪ This chapter discusses applying foundational theory.

Then, review the following that present the five core theoretical models we have emphasized in this course:

- Gilbert, T. F. (1996). _Human competence: Engineering worthy performance_ (Tribute ed.). Silver Spring, MD: International Society for Performance Management.
    ◦ Chapter 5, "Troubleshooting Performance."

- Kaufman, R. (1992). _Strategic planning plus: An organizational guide_. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
    ◦ Chapter 5, "The Rationale for Needs Assessment: Identifying Problems Based on Needs," pages 85–107.

- Mager, R. F., & Pipe, P. (1997). _Analyzing performance problems: Or, you really oughta wanna—How to figure out why people aren't doing what they should be, and what to do about it_. Atlanta, GA: CEP Press.
    ◦ "Introduction: Considering the Whole," pages 1–6.
    ◦ "They're Not Doing What They Should Be Doing," pages 6–15.
    ◦ "Quick-Reference Checklist & Final Thoughts," pages 161–169.

- Rummler, G. A., & Brache, A. P. (2012). _Improving performance: How to manage the white space on the organization chart_ (3rd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
    ◦ Chapter 2, "Three Levels of Performance: Organization, Process, and Job/Performer," pages 12–26.

- Swanson, R. A. (2007). _Analysis for improving performance: Tools for diagnosing organizations and documenting workplace expertise_ (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.
    ◦ Chapter 4, "Concepts for Diagnosing Performance," pages 49–56.
    ◦ Chapter 5, "The Performance Diagnosis Process," pages 57–77.

u08a1 - Presentation of Research Findings

Overview

This assignment is the seventh in a series of eight assignments that culminates in your final project, Needs Assessment:

- Week 2: Needs Assessment Issue Selection.
- Week 3: Kick-Off Interview.
- Week 4: Research Methods.
- Week 5: Gap Analysis.
- Week 6: Cause Map.
- Week 7: Job Task Analysis.
- **_Week 8: Presentation of Research Findings._**

- Week 10: Needs Assessment.

Based on your research plan outlined in the Research Methods assignment and other activities in this course, you have collected key information using your two specific research methods plus your review of existing data. The results of your research should be available now for you to report. In this assignment, you will present the data from your course research in a cumulative narrative report.

Instructions

Review the feedback you received in last week's peer-review discussion. In your revised narrative report:

1. Describe the organizational problem being studied.
   ◦ Describe the organizational problem in a one-sentence statement problem statement.
   ◦ Provide relevant context to indicate significance of the organizational problem.

2. Summarize data compiled while researching an identified performance issue.
   ◦ Identify the data sources (for example, company-wide survey, interview of executives, data-mining of sales data, focus group of sales representatives, and so on).
   ◦ Identify two methods of data collection. Allowable methods include surveys, interviews, focus groups, interactive observations, and process maps.
      ▪ *Do not count the kick-off interview* as one of these two methods.
      ▪ *Do not count the gap analysis, cause map, or JTA* as one of these two methods; they are tools to analyze and present research data.
   ◦ Findings from existing data, documents, and materials should be included as appropriate. These may include tables, charts, lists, process maps, graphs and so forth.
   ◦ The results of your research and the analysis of those findings should be presented in a manner that would be both informative and engaging to stakeholders.

3. Analyze the results of research findings.
   ◦ Summarize and present findings in narrative form and also with appropriate visuals such as tables, charts, lists, process maps, or graphs.
   ◦ Include the actual results of your research and analyze those findings in an informative and interesting manner.
   ◦ Present what you have, and state exactly when the rest will be completed, if not all the research is complete. You must include complete research results in your final paper.

4. Describe the significance of research findings.
   ◦ Do not make any recommendations at this point. You will make recommendations in a later discussion.
   ◦ Discuss how the findings differ from what was assumed to be the causes of the problem at the start of the needs assessment.

5. Summarize plans to present findings to stakeholders involved in a needs assessment.
   ◦ Describe who will receive the presentation.
   ◦ Identify what content you will include in the presentation.

6. Articulate meaning relevant to the main topic, scope, and purpose of the prompt.
   ◦ Focus your response to demonstrate a thorough understanding of the main topic, scope, and purpose of the assignment.

Additional Requirements

Your assignment should also meet the following requirements:

- **Written communication**: Written communication should be scholarly, professional, and consistent with expectations in a professional context.
- **APA format**: The body of narrative, references, and citations should be formatted according to current APA style and formatting guidelines.
- **Font and font size**: Times New Roman, 12 point.

Note: Your instructor may use the Writing Feedback Tool when grading this assignment. The Writing Feedback Tool is designed to provide you with guidance and resources to develop your writing based on five core skills. You will find writing feedback in the Scoring Guide for the assignment, once your work has been evaluated. Learn more about the Writing Feedback Tool on the course Tools and Resources page.

Competencies Measured

By successfully completing this assignment, you will demonstrate your proficiency in the following course competencies:

- Competency 1: Diagnose performance issues in organizational systems.
   ◦ Describe the organizational problem being studied.

- Competency 2: Employ appropriate research and investigation methods.
   ◦ Summarize data compiled while researching an identified performance issue.
   ◦ Analyze the results of research findings.
   ◦ Describe the significance of research findings.

- Competency 4: Consult with internal entities to improve performance.

- Summarize plans to present findings to stakeholders involved in a needs assessment.
  - Competency 5: Communicate clearly and effectively.
    - Articulate meaning relevant to the main topic, scope, and purpose of the prompt.

u08d1 - Write Your Discussion Post

You have read key writings by Swanson, Rummler, Mager, Gilbert, and Kaufman in your readings. Each of these pioneers in HPI made significant contributions to the process of needs assessment (or performance analysis). To help guide the final paper for your own needs assessment project, you will select one of these theorists. Based on the writing of that person, you will apply one theoretical foundation or model in your paper.

For this discussion, select one of the five pioneer writers and explain how that person's writing will inform part or all of your final paper. Be specific about how that person's writing applies to what you have accomplished in your project. In one sentence of your post, remind us of the details of your project. One of the grading elements in your final paper will be this application of theory.

Respond to Your Peers

Respond to the post of two other learners with clear writing, using proper grammar, spelling, and APA formatting. Make sure your responses are substantive; integrate course readings to support key points and analysis. Discuss the learners' reasons for selecting the theorist they chose. Share your own reasons as well.

Read the Discussion Participation Scoring Guide to learn how the instructor will evaluate your discussion participation.

Course Resources

Graduate Discussion Participation Scoring Guide

u08d2 - Write Your Discussion Post

Though more formal intervention or solution selection occurs after the needs assessment is reviewed with stakeholders, you may wish to make some preliminary recommendations based on the research findings that you synthesized last week, the gaps you identified earlier, and the causes you have found. These suggestions may be of two types:

- Proposed interventions that address specific gaps and/or root causes at the systemic and/or individual levels.
- Suggested further directions for researching the problem.

In your post:

- Restate in a single sentence the problem on which your project focused.
- List the recommendations you are making.
- Explain, for each recommendation, those aspects of the problem being addressed.
- Analyze how your recommendations align with or diverge from the problem as it was originally understood and how that might have changed due to the needs assessment.
- Refer to the preliminary performance problem worksheet to recall the initial problem statement.

Respond to Your Peers

Respond to the post of two other learners with clear writing, using proper grammar, spelling, and APA formatting. Make sure your responses are substantive; integrate course readings to support key points and analysis.

Read the Discussion Participation Scoring Guide to learn how the instructor will evaluate your discussion participation.

Course Resources

Unit 9 ≫ Needs Assessment Project Peer Review

Introduction

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Documenting the Assessment and Its Results

A performance consultant was hired by a hospital to investigate high turnover among operating room nurses. After the needs assessment research and analysis are completed, the consultant documents the process and explains the validity of the results in a final report.

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This week, you will post a draft of your course project and have the opportunity to receive feedback from your fellow learners and the instructor. If you would like feedback on specific aspects of your course project, be sure to note these areas when you post your project in the discussion.

Your final course project is due in Week 10, and you need to make any necessary revisions before the due date.

To-Do List:

- **Discussion**: Draft and submit the final course project due next week, Needs Assessment, for peer review.
- **What You Need to Know**: Review previous readings as you prepare your course project for the peer review.

Learning Activities

u09s1 - Activity Overviews

Discussion Overview

Peer Review

Post a complete draft of next week's final course project, Needs Assessment, so that you can receive feedback from your peers. Provide helpful and constructive feedback for two of your peers to help them improve their drafts

u09s2 - What You Need to Know

There is no new reading this week.

You are encouraged to review previous readings, especially those by your chosen foundational theorist, as you prepare the draft of your course project for peer review.

u09d1 - Write Your Discussion Post

Peer Review: Needs Assessment

Your final course project, Needs Assessment, is due next week.

Based on your research plan outlined in the Research Methods assignment and other activities in this course, you have collected key information using your two specific research methods plus your review of existing data. The results of your research should be available for you to report. Now present the data from your course research in a cumulative narrative report.

For this discussion, carefully review the Week 10 assignment instructions before you do the following:

- Attach a complete draft of the assignment (the final course project) to this discussion so that you can receive feedback from your peers.
- Provide helpful and constructive feedback for two of your peers to help them improve their drafts.

Note: If you have concerns about specific aspects of your course project, please note them in your post.

Respond to Your Peers

After you have posted a complete draft of the assignment to the discussion board, thoroughly review the drafts of two of your fellow learners and provide constructive feedback that might help them improve their drafts next week before they submit their project to be graded.

Refer to the assignment scoring guide when making your suggestions and cite the grading criteria when appropriate. Review the Discussion Participation Scoring Guide to learn how the instructor will evaluate your discussion participation.

Note: After you receive and consider feedback from your peers, you will incorporate the changes you judge appropriate and submit the revised final project for a grade in Week 10.

Course Resources

Graduate Discussion Participation Scoring Guide

Unit 10 ⟫ Needs Assessment Project Submission

Introduction

The Benefits of HPT

A performance consultant has uncovered a number of causes for the missing inventory in a warehouse. In fact, the inventory was located out of place. The stock had been mis-numbered after the new computer system was implemented. The consultant will present the results to stakeholders now. Needs assessment asks many questions of those who are most likely to have insights into the issue and causes. In this case, several warehouse workers were able to demonstrate to the consultant what appeared to be happening. Without the needs assessment, the company would have paid to have the stock replaced at significant cost.

This week, you will submit your final course project to your instructor and reflect on your experiences in this course. If you wish to communicate privately with your instructor, please write a private e-mail.

To-Do List:

- **Assignment**: Revise and submit the final course project, Needs Assessment, for a grade.
- **Discussion**: Share your course experience reflections with your fellow learners.
- **What You Need to Know**: Review previous readings as you prepare your course project for final submission this week.

Learning Activities

u10s1 - Activity Overviews

Assignment Overview

For this week's final course project, Needs Assessment, you will revise, integrate, and expand upon all previous assignments completed for the course to create a comprehensive needs assessment report (20–25 pages) with associated appendices.

Discussion Overview

Course Reflection

Share your course experience reflections with your fellow learners.

u10s2 - What You Need to Know

There is no new reading this week.

You are encouraged to review previous readings, especially those by your chosen foundational theorist, as you prepare your course project for final submission.

u10a1 - Needs Assessment

Overview

This assignment is your final project, Needs Assessment:

- Week 2: Needs Assessment Issue Selection.
- Week 3: Kick-Off Interview.
- Week 4: Research Methods.
- Week 5: Gap Analysis.
- Week 6: Cause Map.
- Week 7: Job Task Analysis.
- Week 8: Presentation of Research Findings.
- ***Week 10: Needs Assessment.***

This final project is a comprehensive needs assessment that analyzes the selected problem and explains what was revealed through the needs assessment. It will be written in a fashion similar to a case study. As the whole is greater than the individual pieces, this final paper must add new value by interpreting the significance of material presented in previous course assignments.

Instructions

Revise your final course paper based on feedback you received from your peers and the instructor.

In your final course paper:

1. Diagnose performance issues in organizational systems.
    ◦ Explain the type of organization and the issues that prompted the assessment.

2. Employ appropriate research and investigative methods.
    ◦ Include the methods and findings of your original research plus findings from review of existing data and documents.
    ◦ Be sure your findings include, but are not limited to, all previous assignments, research results gained in the interviews or surveys, research conducted in discussions, and recommendations you have formulated based on the evidence produced by the needs assessment process.

3. Conduct a needs assessment.
    ◦ Explain the various research methods employed to understand the performance gaps and the causes for those gaps.

- Explain the methodology and results of the data that were collected, proposed next steps (implementation of a training or non-training solution), and conclusions.
- Explain how understanding of the nature and causes of the problem have evolved due to the needs assessment.

4. Consult with internal entities to improve performance.
   - Demonstrate how you developed a partnership with individuals in the organization and obtained their support to conduct a needs assessment.

5. Integrate the elements of a needs assessment.
   - Include all previous course assignments. Some language and materials from previous assignments will weave fluidly into the narrative of your paper. Others should be included as appendices, even if they are discussed in your narrative.
   - Discuss the relationships between the primary causes of the problem.
   - Include possible actions that might ameliorate the problem, with each action tied directly to the causes of the problem.
   - Include a strong conclusion that synthesizes findings from the assessment process and reflects on the project as a whole. How did conducting a needs assessment matter?

6. Apply theoretical models and concepts to a needs assessment.
   - Employ at least one theorist's needs assessment model and concepts across your final paper as appropriate, not solely in a separate theory section.
   - Include principles or concepts from this theorist's writing to support the methods and findings of your chosen needs assessment project.
   - Provide the theorist's ideas as support when you present recommendations in your conclusion.

7. Convey purpose in an appropriate tone and style, incorporating supporting evidence and adhering to organizational, professional, and scholarly writing standards.

Additional Requirements

Your assignment should also meet the following requirements:

- **APA format**: Include a title page, table of contents, and appendices. Those elements plus the body of narrative, references and citations should be formatted according to current APA style and formatting guidelines.
- **Length**: 20–25 typed double-spaced pages, plus front elements and appendices.
- **Font and font size**: Times New Roman, 12 point.
- **Format**: The final paper must include all previous project-related assignments, plus application of a selected theoretical model, and a conclusion that synthesizes findings from the assessment process and reflects on the project as a whole. The Preliminary Performance Problem Worksheet, Gap Analysis Worksheet, Cause Map, Job Task Analysis, and any findings tables or charts longer than one page should all be attached as appendices to the final paper. Completed worksheets should retain their original format.

Note: Your instructor may use the Writing Feedback Tool when grading this assignment. The Writing Feedback Tool is designed to provide you with guidance and resources to develop your writing based on five core skills. You will find writing feedback in the Scoring Guide for the assignment, once your work has been evaluated. Learn more about the Writing Feedback Tool on the course Tools and Resources page.

ePortfolio

Submit this assignment to your ePortfolio. Continual updating of your ePortfolio is critical to the completion of your degree. It is important that you add files to your ePortfolio as you progress through your program, since you will eventually lose access to your courses and the files in them. Include the link to your ePortfolio in the **WRITE SUBMISSION** textbox in the assignment area.

Competencies Measured

By successfully completing this assignment, you will demonstrate your proficiency in the following course competencies:

- Competency 1: Diagnose performance issues in organizational systems.
  - Diagnose performance issues in organizational systems.

- Competency 2: Employ appropriate research and investigation methods.
  - Employ appropriate research and investigative methods.

- Competency 3: Conduct a needs assessment.
  - Conduct a needs assessment.
  - Apply theoretical models and concepts to a needs assessment.

- Competency 4: Consult with internal entities to improve performance.
  - Consult with internal entities to improve performance.

- Competency 5: Communicate clearly and effectively.
  - Integrate the elements of a needs assessment.
  - Convey purpose in an appropriate tone and style, incorporating supporting evidence and adhering to organizational, professional, and scholarly writing standards.

u10d1 - Write Your Discussion Post

For this discussion, address the following prompts:

- What were the three most significant areas of learning for you in this course?
- How has your view of the course topic changed, based on the course readings and the interaction with your peers and the instructor?
- In what ways have you translated the concepts and skills you learned in this course to practical, everyday useful ideas?

Responses to other learners are not required for this discussion.

Course Resources

Graduate Discussion Participation Scoring Guide