

I. Needs Assessment

ASSIGNMENT: CONDUCTING A NEEDS ASSESSMENT

(20 points)

The first step in the instructional design process is conducting a Need Assessment. Having a needs assessment strategy helps you from over-researching a topic. Given that you have limited time to conduct a needs assessment, a strategy gives you a plan before "walking out the door".

Task: You will be conducting a Needs Assessment for your current or anticipated teaching or professional environment. When determining when to conduct a needs assessment you should investigate when:

1. No big problem is apparent, but the organization wishes to or is required to engage in developing a new learning/training program (**Discrepancy-Based Needs Assessment**). For example: Your principal determines that each teacher is only using Powerpoint in their classroom for lecture. Your committee is charged with developing a training program for the teachers who need to learn alternative uses for the Powerpoint software.
2. There's a problem: Clients are not satisfied; students are dropping out in unexpected numbers; parents are complaining; products are defective; test scores are down (**Problem-Finding-Problem Solving Assessment**) For example: An analysis of your EOC scores for Mathematics indicates that students are not doing well on the geometry strand. Your committee is charged with the responsibility of analyzing the data and the current curriculum alignment to determine a solution that will raise student achievement scores on the EOC geometry strand.
3. There is or may be something new that our learners need to learn: New guidelines from the state Department of Education suggest that all learners be proficient in computer mediated communication; new equipment is being added that employees need to operate; we have new employees who require redemption in order to do their jobs (**Innovation Needs Assessment**). For example: Your school is adding 20 computer stations in the library as a means of allowing students to use the Internet for research. Your committee is charged with developing a training program for students to help them learn new and efficient ways of searching the Internet.

Consider the above situations that normally lead one to conduct a Needs Assessment in light of your employment situation. Brainstorm possible situations under each of the situations above circumstances.

Conducting the Needs Assessment: Gather all of the appropriate data you may need. Spend some time analyzing the information. Choose one of the following Needs Assessment Models to conduct your Needs Assessment:

- Discrepancy-Based Needs Assessment
- Problem-Finding, Problem-Solving Model
- Innovation Model

Writing up the Results: Use the following criteria to report out the results of your Needs Assessment

- Explain what Needs Assessment model you used and why (2 points)
- For the Discrepancy-Based need assessment describe the discrepancy and give a rationale for why the organization wishes to or is being required to engage in the learning-training program. For the Problem-Finding, Problem Solving model explain the problem that you uncovered, presenting data and/or a rationale that substantiates the existence of the problem. For the Innovation model explain the new innovation and why your organization is attempting to introduce the new innovation. (2 points)

- For either model you use identify the instructional or training need that will result for the adoption of the innovation or the solution to a problem or closing the discrepancy that you've identified. Validate the instructional or training need using data. Data can be either quantitative or qualitative. Consider looking at standardized test scores, student projects, anecdotes, journal entries, etc. (2 points)
- In every training session there are both instructional and non-instructional needs. Above you've identified the instructional needs. Now, point out where there non-instructional interventions. (2 points)
- Describe the learning environment. (8 points) The following questions should be considered when describing the learning environment:
 1. What are the characteristics of the teachers/trainers who will be using your instructional unit/materials?
 2. Are there existing curricula into which their piece of instruction must fit? If so, what is the philosophy, strategy, or theory used in these materials?
 3. What hardware is commonly available in the potential learning environment(s)? Are computer workstations available? If so, what kind, how many, and in what configurations and networks? What about slide or overhead projectors? What software and other materials are available?
 4. What are the characteristics of the classes and facilities that will use the new instruction?
 5. What are the characteristics of the school system in which the new instruction will take place?
 6. What is the philosophy and what are the taboos of the larger community in which the organization or school system exists?
- Describe the learners (4 points). You do not need to describe all of the characteristics in the outline, but identify the characteristics that will have an impact on the instructional or training of the learners.

Format: There is no "right" way to write your report. Think of this as a report to your principal or the school board, or parents, or the administration of the organization that has employed you to address the "NEED". The only requirement for writing is that you use standard English grammar, use appropriate APA or MLA documentation when warranted, and present your report in a professional manner. (Keep in mind you can use technology to prepare your report - for example, you can present it in a Powerpoint format, or you post it on your web page in a PDF format, or you can print out a copy and turn it into your professor).