



The CPD Standards Office
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2.4 TRAINING CYCLE (ANALYSIS)

The training cycle, also known as the training process or training lifecycle, refers to the systematic and continuous process of planning, implementing, evaluating, and improving training initiatives within an organisation. It consists of several interconnected stages that guide the development and delivery of effective training programs.

The typical stages of the training cycle include:

1. Analysis
2. Design
3. Develop
4. Deliver
5. Evaluate

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Needs assessment analysis, also known as training needs analysis, is the systematic process of identifying and evaluating the knowledge, skills, abilities, and performance gaps within an organisation or among its employees. It involves gathering data to determine the specific areas where training interventions are needed to address deficiencies, improve performance, and support organisational goals.

The importance of 'needs assessment analysis' lies in its ability to:

- **Identify Training Needs:** By analysing the current knowledge, skills, and abilities of employees, needs assessment analysis helps identify areas where additional training or development is required to meet job requirements, enhance performance, and support career progression.
 - **Allocate Resources Effectively:** Needs assessment analysis enables organisations to allocate training resources, such as time, budget, and personnel, more effectively by targeting areas with the greatest need for improvement or development.
 - **Tailor Training Programs:** Understanding the specific training needs of employees allows organisations to design and deliver training programs that are relevant, engaging, and directly applicable to their roles and responsibilities. Tailored training programs are more likely to be well-received and result in improved performance outcomes.
 - **Support Organisational Objectives:** By aligning training initiatives with organisational goals and priorities, needs assessment analysis ensures that training interventions contribute directly to the achievement of strategic objectives and business outcomes.
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Knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) are distinct yet interrelated components that contribute to an individual's competence and performance in a particular area. Here's a breakdown of each element and how they differ, along with an example related to a leadership training course:



Knowledge

- Definition: Knowledge refers to the **theoretical** understanding and awareness of facts, **concepts, principles**, or theories related to a specific topic or subject matter.
- Example: In a leadership training course, knowledge may include understanding leadership **theories, such as transformational leadership, situational leadership**, or servant leadership. It involves knowing about leadership models, frameworks, and best practices, as well as the principles of effective communication, conflict resolution, and decision-making.



Skills

- Definition: Skills are the practical abilities or competencies that individuals develop through practice, experience, and training. **Skills involve the application of knowledge** to perform tasks or activities effectively.
- Example: In a leadership training course, skills may include communication skills, such as active listening, public speaking, and delivering constructive feedback. It also encompasses interpersonal skills, such as **relationship building, team collaboration**, and conflict management. Leadership skills involve the ability to motivate and inspire others, delegate tasks, make strategic decisions, and adapt to changing circumstances.



Abilities

- Definition: Abilities refer to the innate or acquired aptitudes, talents, or capacities that individuals possess, which enable them to perform certain tasks or activities proficiently. Abilities are often considered inherent traits that **influence how effectively individuals can acquire and apply knowledge and skills**.
- Example: In a leadership training course, abilities may include emotional intelligence, resilience, adaptability, and problem-solving capabilities. These abilities influence a leader's **capacity to navigate challenges, inspire trust and confidence**, and lead teams toward achieving organisational goals. For example, a leader with high emotional intelligence can effectively manage interpersonal relationships, understand and regulate emotions, and empathise with team members' perspectives.



In summary, knowledge represents the theoretical understanding of concepts and principles, skills involve the practical application of knowledge to perform tasks, and abilities encompass innate or acquired traits that influence performance. In a leadership training context, individuals may need to develop a combination of knowledge, skills, and abilities to become effective leaders who can inspire, motivate, and guide others toward success.

During the process of analysing training needs, various activities can be undertaken to gather information, assess existing competencies, and identify areas for improvement.

Here are some common types of activities:

-  **Surveys and Questionnaires:** Administering surveys or questionnaires to employees or relevant stakeholders to gather information about their perceived knowledge, skills, and training needs. Surveys can be distributed electronically or in print format and may include questions about job responsibilities, challenges, and desired training topics.
-  **Interviews:** Conducting one-on-one interviews or focus group discussions with employees, managers, supervisors, or subject matter experts to explore training needs, performance gaps, and development opportunities. Interviews allow for more in-depth exploration of individual experiences, perspectives, and specific training requirements.
-  **Observations:** Observing employees in their work environment to assess their performance, behaviours, and interactions. Direct observation provides firsthand insights into job tasks, workflow processes, skill utilisation, and areas where additional training or support may be needed.
-  **Skills Assessments:** Administering skills assessments or competency tests to evaluate employees' proficiency in specific job-related tasks or areas of expertise. Skills assessments may include practical exercises, simulations, or knowledge tests to measure performance and identify areas for improvement.
-  **Performance Reviews and Records:** Review employee performance evaluations, job appraisals, training records, and feedback from supervisors to identify patterns, trends, and areas of strength or weakness. Performance reviews provide valuable insights into employees' demonstrated competencies, performance levels, and development needs.



-  **Job Analysis:** Analysing job descriptions, role expectations, and organisational objectives to identify the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for successful job performance. Job analysis helps ensure that training initiatives are aligned with job-related competencies and performance expectations.
-  **Skills Gap Analysis:** Comparing current employee skills and competencies against desired or required skills for their roles or job functions. Skills gap analysis identifies discrepancies between existing and needed competencies, highlighting areas where additional training or development is needed to close the gap.
-  **Review of Organisational Goals and Initiatives:** Aligning training needs analysis with organisational goals, strategic priorities, and performance objectives. Understanding how training initiatives support broader organisational objectives ensures that training investments are aligned with business priorities and contribute to overall success.

By engaging in these types of activities, organisations can gain a comprehensive understanding of their training needs, identify priority areas for development, and design targeted training interventions that address specific skill gaps and support organisational goals.



In the analysis stage of training needs assessment, several common mistakes can occur, leading to potential consequences that may impact the effectiveness of training initiatives and overall organisational performance.

Some of the most common mistakes include:

-  **Incomplete or Inaccurate Data Collection:** Failing to gather comprehensive and accurate data regarding training needs, skills gaps, and performance deficiencies. This may result in overlooking critical areas for improvement or inaccurately assessing the training requirements of employees.
-  **Assuming Needs Without Validation:** Making assumptions about training needs or performance gaps without validating them through data-driven analysis or consultation with relevant stakeholders. This can lead to misalignment between training initiatives and actual organisational needs, resulting in wasted resources and ineffective training outcomes.
-  **Ignoring Stakeholder Input:** Neglecting to involve key stakeholders, such as employees, managers, supervisors, and subject matter experts, in the needs assessment process. Excluding stakeholders' perspectives and insights may result in overlooking valuable information and failing to address their specific training requirements.
-  **Focusing Solely on Training Solutions:** Overemphasising training as the solution to performance issues without considering other factors that may contribute to performance gaps, such as process inefficiencies, resource constraints, or organisational culture. This narrow focus may result in implementing training interventions that fail to address the underlying root causes of performance issues.
-  **Lack of Alignment with Organisational Goals:** Failing to align training needs analysis with broader organisational goals, strategic priorities, and performance objectives. This disconnect may result in developing training programs that do not contribute to achieving organisational objectives or addressing critical skill gaps needed for business success.
-  **Failure to Prioritise Needs:** Not prioritising training needs based on their strategic importance, urgency, or impact on organisational performance. This may result in allocating resources inefficiently, focusing on less critical areas for development, or neglecting high-priority training requirements that are essential for achieving organisational objectives.



Consequences of these common mistakes in the analysis stage of training needs assessment may include:

- **Ineffective Training Programmes:** Training initiatives may fail to address the actual needs of employees or the organisation, resulting in low engagement, poor learning outcomes, and limited transfer of new skills to the job.
- **Wasted Resources:** Misdirected investments in training programs that do not align with organisational priorities or address critical skill gaps may lead to wasted time, money, and resources.
- **Decreased Employee Performance:** Failure to identify and address performance deficiencies through targeted training interventions may result in continued subpar performance, decreased productivity, and missed opportunities for improvement.
- **Negative Organisational Impact:** Inadequate analysis of training needs may have broader implications for organisational effectiveness, including decreased competitiveness, reduced innovation, and diminished employee morale and engagement.

To mitigate these risks, organisations should ensure thorough and data-driven analysis of training needs, involve key stakeholders in the process, prioritise needs based on strategic importance, and align training initiatives with organisational goals and objectives.
