



Coffee Break Training - Training Programs

What Is Human Performance Technology? Part 1 of 2

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Learning Objective: Students shall be able to define Human Performance Technology and describe how the ADDIE process can be used in closing performance gaps.

According to the International Society for Performance Improvement, Human Performance Technology (HPT) is a systematic approach to improving productivity and competence. It uses a set of methods and procedures (and a strategy for solving problems) for realizing opportunities related to the performance of people. More specifically, it is a process of selection, Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation of programs to most cost-effectively influence human behavior and accomplishment. It is a systematic combination of three fundamental processes: performance analysis, cause analysis, and intervention selection, and can be applied to individuals, small groups, and large organizations.

That's a mouthful! And, we wouldn't expect any less from a very large professional society. So let's break it down into more palatable chunks. We'll start with the definition of HPT, move to Analysis, and forward from there. Keep in mind the end question. What is it that we want Joe or Jane Firefighter, First Responder, EMS personnel, or Public Educator to be able to do (not know) when they walk out of the door of our classrooms?

Human: the individuals and groups that make up our organizations

Performance: activities and measurable outcomes

Technology: a systematic and systemic approach to solve practical problems

That's easy enough to understand, but what about the rest of it, ADDIE. ADDIE is the Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation of our programs.

Analysis: Analysis can and should be broken into two parts: (1) a systematic analysis of the need or opportunity and (2) a systematic analysis of the work and workplace to identify the cause or factors that are limiting performance.

1. Analysis should occur at the beginning of the project. Needs or opportunity analysis is about examining the current situation at any level or multiple levels (society, organizational, process, or work group) to identify the external and internal factors affecting it. This process will determine the deficiencies and performance gaps that require a remedy. The output is a statement describing the current state, the estimated future state, and the rationale or case for action or nonaction.
2. Cause analysis is about determining why a gap in performance or expectations exists. Some causes are obvious such as not having the correct tool to do the expected task. This step in the systematic process will determine what should be addressed to improve performance. The output is a statement of why performance is not happening or will not happen without some intervention. Job task analysis includes the identification of the important tasks that employees must perform and the knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform them. The output is a performance statement and objectives that describe the desired performance, outline the conditions under which the performance is done, and identify the criteria for successful performance.

So, the picture is becoming clearer. In terms of Human Performance, we need to look first at the need or opportunity and identify the internal or external factors affecting it. Then, we need to determine what the cause is for the gap that exists in performance by identifying the important tasks that make up that performance. Ok, it makes sense so far.

See Part 2 of "What Is Human Performance Technology?" dated June 14, 2012.



Students should remember to take Human Performance Technology (HPT) with them from the classroom, and apply those principles to their organization.

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