The mission of the Professional Development Program is to make a difference in a changing world by linking the learning, applied research, and evaluation resources of the University with the continuing professional education needs of public service employees. In order to achieve this, the Program is to make a difference in a changing environment of child welfare. In the end, the goal is to develop the competencies necessary for the workers that are performance-based and designed to develop the competencies necessary for the tasks that workers must proficiently perform in their jobs. By using a competency-based training model, PDP has enabled government and private sector contract to provide training programs that produce high-performing employees. PDP

Editor Moving On

In November, 2016, Dianne Eaton, editor of the PDP Newsletter, completed her five years as editor. PDP newsletter has been able to communicate clearly why technology delivered training turned our thinking in too many scenarios. Technology was only a delivery vehicle—critical to the outcomes. Actually achieving the goal of greater productivity through the acquisition of useful skills and knowledge required more than just the technology-based platforms. Delivering learning by the quickest means has not guaranteed that the results would be useful or applicable. In this environment, the PDP, Competency-Based Training (CBT), which originated in the academic environment in the 1980s, began making a comeback. The renewed interest in CBT has gained traction in both corporate and government training.

CBT, with its emphasis on learning defined by the acquisition of specific competencies, has been more consistently shown to achieve outcomes. In the CBT model, what a person does as the result of training becomes the focus rather than the process of training. CBT assesses the individual’s performance to specific standards rather than the individual’s achievements relative to others in the group. The advantage of the CBT model could include flexible delivery, self-paced methodologies, performance orientation, recognition of great performance, and evaluation rather than norm-referencing. In effect, CBT leads to consistency in performance standards, leading to the certification of trainees who have met the standards of knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to be effective workers. CBT has consistently designed its training curriculum after the CBT model, starting in 1997 when it adopted the Clark, to the present day. Although this competency-based approach has gained traction in both corporate and government training, CBT also began making a comeback. The renewed interest in CBT has gained traction in both corporate and government training.

The final stages of instructional design are evaluation and revision. As part of the pilot process, the CBT participants completed level 1 evaluations that focused on initial participant reactions regarding difficulty, pacing of delivery, and overall impressions. PDP also collected Open Comment sheets to provide subjective evaluation to provide more specific insights into the curriculum and delivery. These comments are assisting a round of revisions to the program currently in process. Also, as part of the ongoing process of evaluation and revision, future participants will be provided with level 2 evaluations (a pre-test and post-test) to determine learning gain and identify areas in need of improvement.

Competency-Based Training—Always Effective, Always Relevant

Eugene J. Monaco, Executive Director and Public Service Professor

Professional Development Program, Rockefeller College

As employees and employers alike continue to seek the shortest routes to the greatest results in the least time, technology-delivered training held great promise. Yet, technology delivered training turned our thinking in too many scenarios. Technology was only a delivery vehicle—critical to the outcomes. Actually achieving the goal of greater productivity through the acquisition of useful skills and knowledge required more than just the technology-based platforms. Delivering learning by the quickest means has not guaranteed that the results would be useful or applicable. In this environment, the PDP, Competency-Based Training (CBT), which originated in the academic environment in the 1980s, began making a comeback. The renewed interest in CBT has gained traction in both corporate and government training.

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Competency-Based Workforce Development: A Promising Approach to Aligning Child Welfare Practice

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High-performing child welfare systems are key to an effective child welfare system, yet few states have the full array of competencies needed for this challenging work ahead. Additionally, those who have been in the field for some time have continued to face burnout due to the demands of their current roles. Recognizing these challenges, the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) formed a workgroup to design a child welfare competency-based workforce development model. The workgroup established several best practices for developing employee competencies throughout the workforce.

Competency-Based Workforce Development: A Promising Approach to Aligning Child Welfare Practice

The workgroup developed a tri-level child welfare competency model built from core competencies, foundational competencies, and functional competencies. The core competencies are directly pulled from the 2015 OCFS Child Welfare Practice Model and established a consistent and comparable approach to child welfare practice across New York State. Each of these core competencies is separated into foundational and functional components. The functional competencies are based on the key KSAs of a particular child welfare practice area. Each competency is linked to one or more measurable performance expectations and passed through a validation process by identifying associated training activities and developing training programs.

Competency modeling is most successful when engaging employees’ intrinsic motivation to learn. Empower employees control their own path to competency and the pace at which learning is progressive and relevant. Competency relies on the proper alignment of organizational goals and competencies throughout the workforce development cycle. Competency should be included in each stage of the workforce development cycle.

In October 2016, the Professional Development Program (PDP) joined forces with NYS Governor’s Office of Employee Relations (GOER) and Rockefeller College, Public Policy and Administration to develop and deliver a year-long program to high-level NYS executives based on the US Office of Personnel Management (OPM), Executive Core Qualifications (ECQs). According to the OPM, “ECQs define the competencies needed to build a federal corporate culture that drives for results, serves the American public, and builds a healthy and diverse work environment both within and outside the organization. The ECQs were designed to identify a standard set of leadership competencies that are general, universal, and applicable to employees in jobs throughout the Federal Government. Federal employees must exhibit a required level of mastery within the ECQs before they can be considered for Senior Executive Service.”

A project-oriented workshop was added as an important part of the program’s 15 training days to help ensure the transfer of the training to the workplaces of these government leaders in the New York State government operations. An additional goal of the team-organized project was to encourage participants to engage in self-reflect on personal comfort zones, and facilitate the transition from competence to mastery in each of the five ECQs.

GOER, Rockefeller College, and the PDP kick-started the program in late February at University Hall on the SUNY Albany campus and it will run through December 2017. PDP

Competency-Based Workforce Development: A Promising Approach to Aligning Child Welfare Practice

The OPM ECQs are:

1. Leading Change
2. Results Driven
3. Building Coalitions
4. Supervision
5. Results Driven

The ECQs established by OPM in 1997 and updated and revisited in 2008 were developed through extensive research on attributes of successful executives in both the private and public sector. They were developed to be the foundational framework for the New York State Leadership Institute’s executive leadership program. NYS GOER identified a need for training that will equip state government leaders with the knowledge, skills, and competencies needed to transform New York State government. Building on GOER’s vision, PDP proposed a collaboration with Rockefeller College, Public Policy and Administration, the Governor’s Office of Employee Relations (GOER), and Rockefeller College, Public Policy and Administration to develop and deliver a year-long program to high-level New York State executives based on the US Office of Personnel Management (OPM), Executive Core Qualifications (ECQs). According to the OPM, “ECQs define the competencies needed to build a federal corporate culture that drives for results, serves the American public, and builds a healthy and diverse work environment both within and outside the organization. The ECQs were designed to identify a standard set of leadership competencies that are general, universal, and applicable to employees in jobs throughout the Federal Government. Federal employees must exhibit a required level of mastery within the ECQs before they can be considered for Senior Executive Service.”

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The OPM ECQs are:
Developing a Performance and Competency-Based Training Institute (HOPTI)

In October 2016, the Professional Development Program (PDP) formed the HOPTI (Hearing Officer Procedural Training Institute) to train NYS Government and Adjudicatory employees on required competencies. HOPTI is a competency-based training program that relies on an adult learning theory to train NYS Hearing Officers to conduct administrative hearings involving issues related to NYS employees who have applied for public benefits. The program is designed to be a comprehensive overview of the instructional design process of a program that includes several elements.

An effective training is planned in the tasks that a worker needs to perform on a daily basis. To achieve these tasks, the HOPTI project team identified the instructional design process by meeting with subject matter experts to conduct a needs assessment and determine the instructional design task. The team focused on identifying training needs, identifying the basic job tasks for which Hearing Officers require proficiency, and determining the training emphasis for each job task.

The next step, designing the course, involved organizing the information gathered into manageable chunks. These chunks were units of lessons, and成型 actionable objectives for each unit and lesson. The HOPTI project also outlined six core units, each broken into smaller, manageable lessons, which accompanied Hearing Officer job tasks. It also contains actionable and specific objectives that detailed exactly what the trainees would be able to do after each unit and lesson. These objectives framed learning expectations and provided a measure that, when met, refined learning that occurred.

The curriculum was composed during the development phase of the instructional design process. A well-designed curriculum “spirals” learning by asking participants to reuse previously learned skills to perform new and increasingly complex tasks. In HOPTI, each unit focused on a specific part of conducting a hearing, and explained how that skill was an integral part of the hearing process. The HOPTI concluded with a mock hearing, an activity that brought together all of the instructional skills practiced throughout the week to simulate the Hearing Officer environment.

The ECQs established by OPM in 1997 and updated and revised in 2008 were developed through extensive research on attributes of successful leaders in both the private and public sector. They serve as the foundational framework for the New York State Leadership Institute’s executive leadership program.

NYS GOER identified a need for training that will equip state government leaders with the knowledge and competencies needed to transform New York State government. Building on GOER’s vision, PDP prepared a collaboration with Rockefeller College’s GOER, Rockefeller College, Public Policy and Administration to develop and deliver a year-long program to high-level NYS executive leadership based on the US Office of Personnel Management (OPM), Executive Core Qualifications (ECQs). According to OPM, “Qualifying individuals for leadership positions needs to build a federal corporate culture that drives for results, serves the public, and builds healthy public service solutions within and outside the organization. The ECQs were designed to evaluate the competencies of federal leaders so that Federal employees must exhibit a required level of mastery within the ECQs before they can be considered for Senior Executive Service.”

A project-oriented approach was adopted as an important part of the program’s training design to help ensure the transfer of the training’s objectives to the workplace and state government operations. An additional goal of the team-based project was to encourage participants to stretch out of their comfort zones and, facilitate the transition from competence to mastery in each of the five ECQs.

GOER, Rockefeller College, and PDP kicked off the program in late February at University Hall on the SUNY Albany campus and it will run through December 2017. PDP


Working in close collaboration with Rockefeller College, GOER, Rockefeller College, Public Policy and Administration (PDP) piloted the five day Hearing Officer Procedural Training Institute (HOPTI) to representatives and subject-matter experts. PDP piloted the five day Hearing Officer Procedural Training Institute (HOPTI) to representatives and subject-matter experts. PDP piloted the five day Hearing Officer Procedural Training Institute (HOPTI) to representatives and subject-matter experts. PDP piloted the five day Hearing Officer Procedural Training Institute (HOPTI) to representatives and subject-matter experts.
High performing caseworkers and supervisors are key to building an effective child welfare system, yet few entering the field have all of the competencies needed for the challenging work ahead. Additionally, those who have been in the field for years continually have more to learn due to emerging policies and best practices. Further complicating this workforce are the generations within the field. Those who are new to the field have all of the competencies needed for the challenging work ahead. Additionally, those who have been in the field for years continually have more to learn due to emerging policies and best practices. Further complicating this workforce are the generations within the field. Those who are new to the field have all of the competencies needed for the challenging work ahead. Additionally, those who have been in the field for years continually have more to learn due to emerging policies and best practices. Further complicating this workforce are the generations within the field. Those who are new to the field have all of the competencies needed for the challenging work ahead. Additionally, those who have been in the field for years continually have more to learn due to emerging policies and best practices.
Once competencies are defined, the professional development program will provide the training necessary to help workers develop the skills necessary to perform their jobs. By using a competency-based training model, PDP has enabled government and private sector contractors to provide training programs that produce high-performing employees.

4. Once competencies are defined, evaluations are needed to quantify employees’ KSAs. Instructive/Descriptive Models of Adult Skill Acquisition assists in assessing a workforce’s competency by placing skill acquisition on a continuum with five stages: Novice, Advanced Beginner, Competent, Proficient, and Expert.

5. Most competency programs begin with thinking about the novice worker and the onboarding process; however, competency programs should consider the entire workforce. In addition, proficient and expert workers can be engaged to teach, mentor, and coach novices and advanced beginners.

The challenge of recruiting and retaining competent child welfare workers is critical to the future of not-for-profits and for-profit entities. However, a competency-based workforce development model with a focus on trainee engagement in the changing environment of child welfare. In the end, the goal is to synergize the child welfare system and its dedicated, changing environment of child welfare. In the end, the goal is to synergize the child welfare system and its dedicated workforce.

Competency-Based Training: Always Effective, Always Relevant

Eugene J. Monaco, Executive Director and Public Service Professor

Professional Development Program, Rockefeller College

As employers and employees alike continue to seek the shortest routes to the greatest results in the last three years, technology-delivered training held great promise. Yet, technology delivered training turned out disappointing in too many scenarios. Technology was only a delivery vehicle—the outcome is the most critical. Actually achieving the outcome of greater productivity through the acquisition of useful skills and knowledge required more than state-of-the-art technology platforms. Defining learning by the quickest means has not guaranteed that the results would be useful or applicable. In this environment, Keep Competency-Based Training (CBT), which originated in the academic environment in the 1960’s, began making a comeback. The renewed interest in CBT has gained traction in both corporate and government training.

CBT, with its emphasis on learning defined by the acquisition of specific competencies, is often incorrectly assumed that outcomes exceed expectations. In the CBT model, a person does as the module dictates; becomes the focus rather than the process of training. CBT focuses on the individual’s performance to specific standards rather than the individual’s achievement of relevant skills in the context of the group of trainees. The advantage of the CBT model includes flexible delivery, self-paced methodologies, performance orientation, recognition of prior learning, and criteria-referencing rather than norm-referencing. In effect, CBT leads to consistency in performance standards, leading to the certification of workers who have met the standards of knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to perform their jobs.

PDP has consistently designed in training curricula after the CBT model, starting in 1997 when it adapted the Instructional System Design (ISD) model developed by Clark, to the present day. Although this competency-based ISD model was similar to the CBT model in many respects, it took other approaches because it is comprehensive and produces the desired output-based outcomes. A number of other systems are implicated with CBT—Competency-Based Workforce Development.

Editor Moving On

In November 2016, Deanna Cooper, editor of the PDP newsletter, announced her decision to move on to other professional opportunities. We express our appreciation for her contributions to the PDP newsletter in the past five years, left PDP to become the Dean of the School of Education at the University at Albany.

PDP’s government training programs have incorporated this approach for their design, including courses such as “Hiring Effective Program Directors,” “Institute for Temporary Assistance Program Directors,” “Nutrition Assistance Program Directors,” “Temporary Assistance Services Training Institute,” “Welfare Fraud Investigators Training Institute,” and the “Adult Skills Institute.”

PDP ’s government training programs have developed a number of training programs that are performance-based and designed to develop the competencies necessary for the tasks that workers must perform in their jobs. By using a competency-based training model, PDP has enabled government and private sector contractors to provide training programs that produce high-performing employees.

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