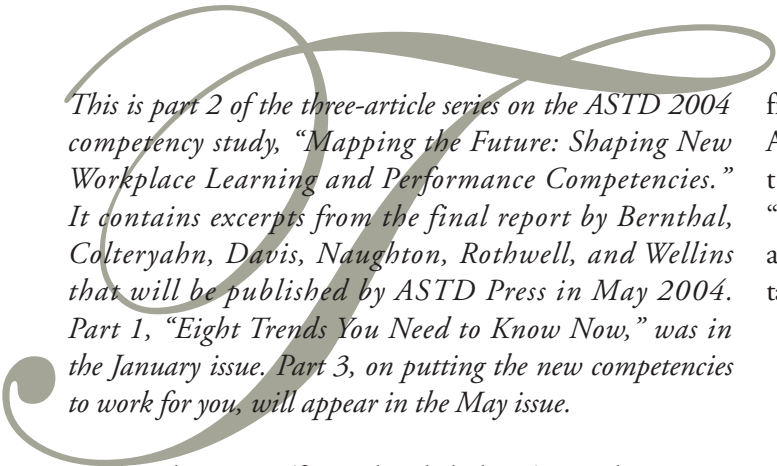


New Roles *and* New Competencies *for the* Profession



This is part 2 of the three-article series on the ASTD 2004 competency study, "Mapping the Future: Shaping New Workplace Learning and Performance Competencies." It contains excerpts from the final report by Bernthal, Colteryahn, Davis, Naughton, Rothwell, and Wellins that will be published by ASTD Press in May 2004. Part 1, "Eight Trends You Need to Know Now," was in the January issue. Part 3, on putting the new competencies to work for you, will appear in the May issue.

SumTotal Systems (formerly Click2learn) president Kevin Oakes in his February *T+D* column E-Learning, "A Seat at the Table," writes about how our roles as business professionals have never been more critical and that we must take action to claim that elusive seat at the leadership table. As members of the learning and performance profession, a field that proves itself through promoting learning and developing others, collectively we have the power to change and reposition ourselves. But the question is, What will it take for each of us to excel and make a difference in our

field?

A tough question—and one that practitioners came to ASTD for answers. The ASTD competency study, "Mapping the Future: Shaping New Workplace Learning and Performance Competencies," was conducted in part to tackle this question.

Are you
ready
for the
next
generation?

By Patty Davis, Jennifer Naughton, and William Rothwell

Tony Bingham, ASTD CEO and president, states that “a defined set of competencies is a hallmark of a true profession, and the practice of creating and supporting a competency model is a key role of a professional association.”

The new model for this dynamic and complex profession was designed with the future in mind—to convey what will be required for the next generation of practitioners, to enable them to provide their organizations with an even higher level of value and service. It encompasses the sometimes conflicting perspectives of the pragmatic performance champions with those who have their eyes on the long-term benefits for humankind. It defines the profession in the context of its strategic contribution to performance, and tries to balance the financial and business goals of institutions with the welfare of the people who are doing the work.

Recent Trends

- 1. Drastic Times, Drastic Measures:** Uncertain economic conditions in the past several years are causing organizations to rethink how to grow and be profitable.
- 2. Blurred Lines—Life or Work?** New organizational structures are altering the nature of work for employees and learning professionals.
- 3. Small World and Shrinking:** Global communication technology is changing the way people connect.
- 4. New Faces, New Expectations:** Diversity in the workplace is on the rise.
- 5. Work Be Nimble, Work Be Quick:** The accelerated pace of change requires more adaptable workers and nimbler organizations.
- 6. Security Alert!** Concerns about security and the effectiveness of governments to provide protection have increased people’s anxiety worldwide.
- 7. Life and Work in the E-Lane:** Technology, especially the Internet, is transforming the way people work and live.
- 8. A Higher Ethical Bar:** Ethical lapses at the highest levels in large, high-profile organizations have shaken employees’ loyalty, trust, and sense of security.

Adapted from “Eight Trends You Need to Know Now” (Colteryahn and Davis, January *T+D*).

The study also included a look at the context and drivers that have influenced the profession. These trends were summarized in the first article of this series, “Eight Trends You Need to Know Now” by Karen Colteryahn and Patty Davis (January *T+D*). A brief recap appears bottom left.

A model of value

Here are some highlights of the 2004 ASTD Competency Model.

Something in it for everyone. Just as the profession spans a range of specialties, jobs, roles, and functions, the model is intentionally broad. Professionals will find the model comprehensive enough to guide career development at different positions and levels within their organizations and across a wide spectrum of areas of expertise (specializations) and roles.

The whole is greater than the sum of the parts. The particular blend of competencies, areas of expertise, and roles embedded into the architecture adds power and utility to the model.

It’s all about us. No other profession can claim this particular model other than the workplace learning and performance profession. The model is specifically tailored to this profession.

A solid foundation. The model has been built on a solid research foundation using a data-driven approach. The model’s context was validated by thousands of workplace learning and performance professionals. (See page 31.)

The value of detail. The model contains carefully worded definitions and has specific key actions and knowledge areas associated with its components. The model has depth and detail beyond what’s provided in this article (full details will be in the ASTD final report to be released in May 2004).

Building blocks

Competencies encompass clusters of skills, knowledge, abilities, and behaviors required for people to succeed. In this case, it refers to success across the jobs in the workplace learning and performance field. The new workplace learning and performance competency model includes three layers: 1) foundational competencies, 2) areas of professional expertise, and 3) roles as depicted in the figures on pages 30, 32, and 34. Each layer will be addressed in turn.

Foundational competencies. Foundational competencies are those competencies that are linked to suc-

Successful performance in the workplace learning and performance field. Those competencies are desirable regardless of an individual's area of expertise (specialization) or role though not all workplace learning and performance practitioners will need each of them to the same extent. The model divides the foundational competencies into these clusters: Interpersonal, Business/Management, and Personal, as seen in the lower tier of the model below and on page 30.

What follows are the definitions of the foundational competencies from the model.

Interpersonal competencies

- **Building trust**—interacting with others in a way that gives them confidence in one's intentions and those of the organization.
- **Communicating effectively**—expressing thoughts, feelings, and ideas in a clear, concise, and compelling manner in both individual and group situations; actively listening to others; adjusting

The 2004 ASTD Competency Model



Foundational Competencies



style to capture the attention of the audience; developing and deploying targeted communication strategies that inform and build support.

- **Influencing stakeholders**—selling the value of learning or the recommended solution as a way to improve organizational performance; gaining commitment to solutions that will improve individual, team, and organizational performance.
- **Leveraging diversity**—appreciating and leveraging the capabilities, insights, and ideas of all individuals; working effectively with individuals having diverse styles, abilities, motivations, and backgrounds, including cultural differences.
- **Networking and partnering**—developing and using a network of collaborative relationships with internal and external contacts to leverage the workplace learning and performance strategy in a way that facilitates the accomplishment of business results.

Business/Management competencies

- **Analyzing needs and proposing solutions**—identifying and understanding business issues and client needs, problems, and opportunities; comparing data from different sources to draw conclusions; using effective approaches for choosing a course of action or developing appropriate solutions; taking action that is consistent with available facts, constraints, and probable consequences.
- **Applying business acumen**—understanding the organization's

business model and financial goals; utilizing economic, financial, and organizational data to build and document the business case for investing in workplace learning and performance solutions; using business terminology when communicating with others.

- **Driving results**—identifying opportunities for improvement and setting well-defined goals related to learning and performance solutions; orchestrating efforts and measuring progress; striving to achieve goals and produce exceptional results.
- **Planning and implementing assignments**—developing action plans, obtaining resources, and completing assignments in a timely manner to ensure that workplace learning and performance goals are achieved.

- **Thinking strategically**—understanding internal and external factors that impact learning and performance in organizations; keeping abreast of trends and anticipating opportunities to add value to the business; operating from a systems perspective in developing learning and performance strategies and building alignment with business strategies.

Personal competencies

- **Demonstrating adaptability**—maintaining effectiveness when experiencing major changes in work tasks, the work environment, or conditions affecting the organization (for example, economic, political, cultural, or technological); remaining open to new people, thoughts, and approaches; adjusting

Learning and performance practitioners often cross over multiple areas and must apply a broad range of skills.

effectively to work within new work structures, processes, requirements, or cultures.

- **Modeling personal development**—actively identifying new areas for one’s own personal learning; regularly creating and taking advantage of learning opportunities; applying newly gained knowledge and skill on the job.

Areas of expertise

In the second tier of the pyramid are the Areas of Expertise (see page 32). AOE’s are the specific technical and professional skills and knowledge areas required for success in the workplace learning and performance field. The AOE’s are specialized areas that build and rely upon the focused application of the foundational competencies. Thus, they are located in the middle tier of the overall model.

Although some workplace learning and performance practitioners are highly specialized, the bottom line is that learning and performance practitioners often cross over multiple areas and must apply a broad range of skills. Most demonstrate expertise in more than one AOE, according to the competency study survey data, shown on page 33.

Further, the AOE’s are supported by and leverage specialized learning technologies. Learning technologies have had a profound influence on the evolution of workplace learning and performance, as referenced in the bar atop the lower tier of the model on page 29. Knowledge and skilled application of specific learning technologies are critical for many jobs in the profession, and are embedded in each AOE. (For complete

details, see the ASTD final report to be released in May 2004.)

What follows are the definitions of the AOE’s in the model.

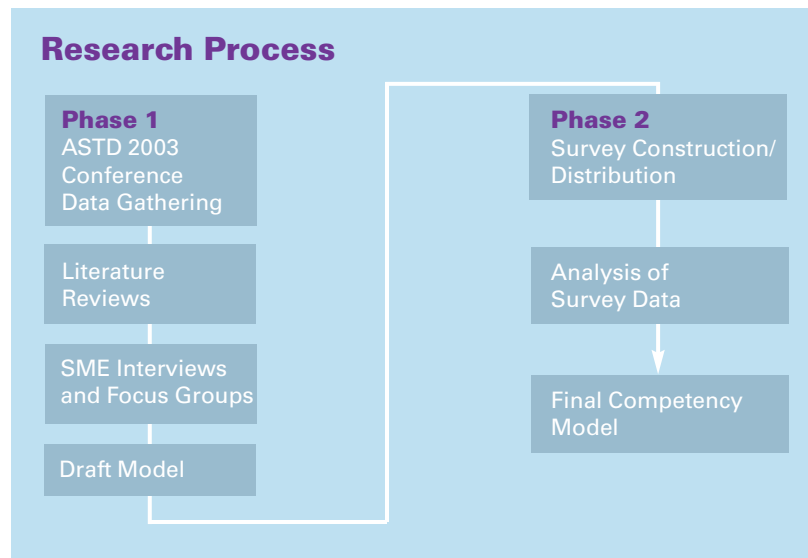
Areas of Expertise

- **Career planning and talent management**—ensuring that employees have the right skills to meet

Study Methodology

How was the competency study conducted?

This graphic depicts the research process at a high level.



Phase I:

1. Teams conducted 75 exploratory interviews with a combination of thought leaders and practitioners at ASTD’s 2003 International Conference and EXPO.
2. Teams conducted an extensive literature review of existing models and publications (nearly 25,000 pages of text).
3. Teams conducted in-depth phone interviews and focus groups with 60 experts, thought leaders, and practitioners.
4. Using the results, the joint teams constructed the draft competency model.

Phase II:

5. The draft served as the foundation of a Web-based survey to validate the model. More than 2050 respondents participated in this survey.
6. The teams interpreted the survey data and finalized the model. Results will be published in the May 2004 ASTD final report.

Areas of Expertise (AOEs)



the strategic challenges of the organization; assuring alignment of individual career planning and organization talent management processes to achieve an optimal match between individual and organizational needs; promoting individual growth and organizational renewal.

- **Coaching**—using an interactive process to help individuals and organizations develop more rapidly and produce more satisfying results; improving others' ability to set goals, take action, make better decisions, and make full use of their natural strengths.
- **Delivering training**—delivering learning solutions (for example, courses, guided experience) in a manner that both engages the learner and produces desired outcomes; managing and responding to learner needs; ensuring that the learning solution is made available or delivered in a timely and effective manner.
- **Designing learning**—designing, creating, and developing learning interventions to meet needs; analyzing and selecting the most appropriate strategy, methodologies, and technologies to maximize the learning experience and impact.
- **Facilitating organizational change**—leading, managing, and facilitating change within organizations.
- **Improving human performance**—applying a systematic process of discovering and analyzing human

performance gaps; planning for future improvements in human performance; designing and developing cost-effective and ethically justifiable solutions to close performance gaps; partnering with the customer when identifying the opportunity and the solution; implementing the solution; monitoring the change; evaluating the results.

- **Managing organizational knowledge**—serving as a catalyst and visionary for knowledge sharing; developing and championing a plan for transforming the organization into a knowledge-creating and sharing entity; initiating, driving, and integrating the organization's knowledge management efforts.

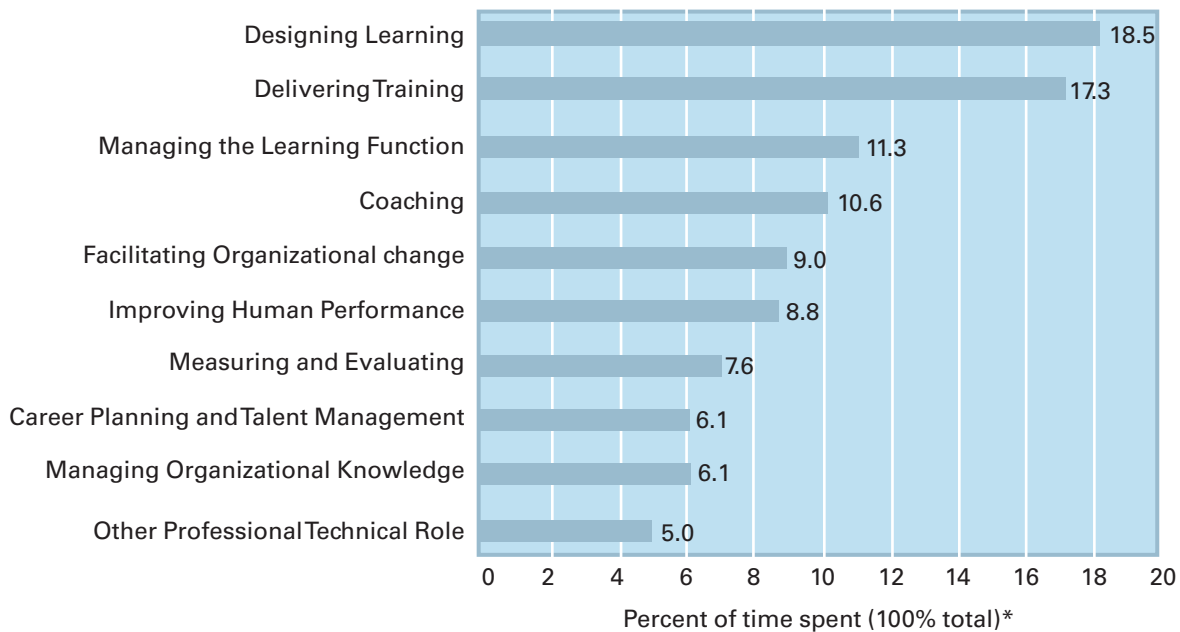
- **Managing the learning function**—providing leadership in developing human capital to execute the organization's strategy; planning, organizing, monitoring, and adjusting activities associated with the administration of workplace learning and performance.

- **Measuring and evaluating**—gathering data to answer specific questions regarding the value or impact of learning and performance solutions; focusing on the impact of individual programs and creating overall measures of system effectiveness; leveraging findings to increase effectiveness and provide recommendations for change.

Roles aren't the same as job titles; they're much more fluid depending on the work or project.

Time Spent in Each AOE

ASTD competency study survey respondents were asked to allocate 100 points to indicate the percentage of time they spend in each of the Areas of Expertise (AOEs). On average, most professionals in the learning and performance field spend the largest share of their time in Designing Learning and Delivering Training. More than 63 percent of professionals spend at least 10 percent of their time in three to five AOEs. The bottom line is that learning and performance practitioners often cross over multiple areas and must apply a broad range of skills.



*Totals may be slightly above or below 100 due to rounding.

Roles

Roles are broad areas of responsibility within workplace learning and performance that require a select group of competencies and AOEs to perform effectively. Roles are not the same as job titles; they are much more fluid depending on the work or project. For the workplace learning and performance professional, playing different roles is analogous to maintaining a collection of hats: When the situation calls for it, the practitioner takes off one hat and dons another. Roles are depicted at the top of the pyramid on page 29 (and up close on page 34) because a vast body of underlying skills and knowledge supports their execution. The following is an example how roles might apply to a chief learning officer.

Role Example: How the Roles Might Apply to a Chief Learning Officer (CLO). The CLO might focus on the Learning Strategist and Business Partner roles and rely

on other people to carry out the Project Manager and Professional Specialist roles. Because the CLO is likely to direct individuals in all AOEs, he or she probably needs some expertise in most—if not all nine—areas of expertise. In fact, the CLO might have had to gain sufficient expertise in several AOEs before rising to the executive level. It would be logical to assume that the CLO has strong skills and knowledge in most, if not all, of the foundational competencies. And because of the nature of the job, he or she might be particularly strong in two areas in particular: Thinking Strategically and Applying Business Acumen.

Following are the definitions of the roles in the model.

Four roles

- **Learning strategist**—determines how workplace learning and performance improvement can best be leveraged to achieve long-term business success and

add value to meet organizational needs; leads in the planning and implementation of learning and performance improvement strategies that support the organization's strategic direction and that are based on an analysis of the effectiveness of existing learning and performance-improvement strategies.

- **Business partner**—applies business and industry knowledge to partner with the client in identifying workplace performance-improvement opportunities; evaluates possible solutions and recommends solutions that will have a positive impact on performance; gains client agreement and commitment to the proposed solutions and collaboratively develops an overall implementation strategy that includes evaluating impact on business performance; uses appropriate interpersonal styles and communication methods to build effective long-term relationships with the client.

- **Project manager**—plans, resources, and monitors the effective delivery of learning and performance solutions in a way that supports the overall business venture; communicates purpose, ensures effective execution of an implementation plan, removes barriers,

ensures adequate support, and follows up.

- **Professional specialist**—designs, develops, delivers, or evaluates learning and performance solutions. Maintains and applies an in-depth working knowledge in any one or more of the workplace learning and performance specialty areas of expertise, including career planning and talent management, coaching, delivering training, designing learning, facilitating organizational change, improving human performance, managing organizational knowledge, managing the learning function, and measuring and evaluating.

What the profession is and isn't

Prior ASTD competency studies have used a wheel graphic to show what disciplines are considered part of the profession. It has also been used to help define the profession as it relates to traditional human resource disciplines and other functions and operations that are involved or related—that is, what is outside the profession.

The figure at right depicts an updated version of that wheel. All of the traditional human resource and organizational disciplines, as well as AOE's, make up the spokes. In order that they contribute to an organization's success, they must be aligned with the business strategy. This alignment drives and contributes to business performance.

The left side of the wheel (in blue) shows workplace learning and performance. The bottom left (light blue) identifies the specific AOE's that focus primarily on learning and development solutions as the means to improving performance. The upper left (dark blue) represents AOE's that are broader in focus and may involve solutions outside of learning and development interventions. A key point is that workplace learning and performance sometimes draws from other outside disciplines and functions. One example is a change consultant facilitating organizational change who is part of an overall effort to restructure and redesign certain jobs. Another is a human performance

Workplace Learning and Performance Roles



consultant who chooses to focus on rewards and recognition or compensation and benefits as a means to address performance issues.

Continuing with the wheel, traditional HR disciplines appear in the upper right section (gold). The bottom right portion (purple) includes examples of other nonworkplace learning and performance functions such as sales, marketing, and customer service that are frequently involved when carrying out workplace learning and performance initiatives. All organizational disci-

plines help drive business performance. As the workplace learning and performance profession continues to evolve, it is likely to continue seeing its practitioners incorporating solutions from other organizational disciplines to help them maximize impact.

The proof is in the application

The foundational competencies, AOE, and roles defined in this article pinpoint the skills, knowledge, actions, and responsibilities that are required

The New Learning and Performance Wheel



to varying degrees for learning and performance professionals to succeed. So, one could argue that we now have a picture of what it will take for each one of us to excel and make a difference in our field. But this doesn't necessarily answer the question, How? The real value of the workplace learning and performance competencies and the power of model are realized in its application.

Next month's article by William Rothwell and Rich Wellins, on putting the new competencies to work for you, will address that topic directly. **TD**

Patty Davis served as the Development Dimensions International (DDI) project manager for the 2004 ASTD competency study. She is a senior consultant at DDI, a global human resource consulting firm specializing in leadership development and the design of selection and assessment systems, in Bridgeville, Pennsylvania; patty.davis@ddiworld.com. **Jennifer Naughton**, SPHR, is the manager of the ASTD competency study and ASTD's emerging certification program for the learning and performance professional; jnaughton@astd.org. **William Rothwell**, PhD, SPHR, is Professor-in-Charge of Workforce Education and Development in the department of learning and performance systems on the University Park campus of Pennsylvania State University. At Penn State, he leads a graduate specialization in workplace learning and performance. He is also an independent consultant, president of Rothwell and Associates Inc., a company specializing in train-the-trainer services; www.rothwell-associates.com.

Look for Competency Study updates on the ASTD Website (www.astd.org), under research. Article questions or comments should be addressed to competencystudy@astd.org.