THE DIMENSIONS OF COMPETENCE

Dimensions	Examples of where they are found in a unit				
Task skills	e.g. use a photocopier				
	Task skills are usually described in the elements and performance criteria.				
Task management skills	e.g. select the right paper and functions Task management skills are found in the performance criteria, underpinning skills and knowledge. They may also appear in the Range statements.				
Contingency skills	e.g. clear paper jams Contingency skills are usually found in the critical aspects of evidence, performance criteria and the underpinning skills and knowledge. They also appear in the range statements,				
Job/role environment skills	e.g. liaise with team members on print job requirements Job/role environment skills are mostly covered in the key competencies and underpinning skills and knowledge.				
Transfer skills	e.g. use a different brand of photocopier Transfer skills are covered in the underpinning skills and knowledge and/or the range of variables.				
Safe working skills	e.g. use gloves when changing toner Amazingly, this was not considered as a Key Competency or as a Dimension of Competence although vitally important to work productivity and the wellbeing of the candidate. Many Units list key OH&S knowledge and skills. A smart assessor considers these in planning assessment methods and assessment tool.				
LL&N skills	Again, this is not listed generally as a Dimension of Competency, but is vitally important in ensuring that the candidate can read and act upon work instructions, notices and work procedural manuals. ASF levels 1-3 generally have LL&N requirements in the Units, they become less frequent in Units designed for ASF Levels 4-6.				

This table has been adapted from a table in the Toolbox for BSZ401A Plan assessment, © ANTA

PLANNING FOR SPECIFIC ORGANISATIONAL OR JOB REQUIREMENTS

If there are no benchmarks to follow, or you cannot find one that fits your purpose, one of the easiest ways to begin the planning process is to use a Component Skills Matrix in which you can incorporate the Dimensions of Competency derived from an analysis of the job with organisational requirements added in from corporate objectives, work procedural manuals and industry standards.

One of the benefits of using a Dimensions of Competency Matrix is that it ensures that you cover all aspects of a job role or work process in your basic planning.

Having determined the parameters through the matrix, it takes very little time to go through step-bystep and document the learning outcomes, which are the benchmarks for delivery.

There is another advantage of being this thorough in your planning process:

- you have automatically created a task breakdown which enables you to plan skills demonstrations step-by-step
- you have defined a routine for skills practice by the learner which you can use to design the training program that prepares the learner for the assessment tasks

It is also well worth you while to go through this process, because well-defined learning outcomes easily translate into assessment outcomes and can form the basis for your checklists or assessment plans.

This matrix is highly adaptable to the planning of any kind of learning outcome or work procedure.

In the example on the next page, the organisation has decided that all mobile workers should be trained in basic car maintenance so that they can cope with all the little emergencies that can make life difficult when travelling on company business. The organisation has decided that the responsibility for maintaining vehicles in roadworthy condition is to form part of their work duties.

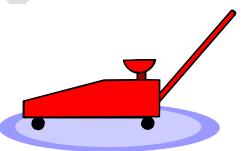
This program will include:

- recognising the handling characteristics that indicate that the vehicle needs service or repair
- checking the fuel, oil, radiator, battery electrolyte and brake fluid levels
- checking tyres for wear and air levels
- checking that all lights and indicators are in good working order
- checking the status of warning lights
- ensuring that the vehicle is carrying a complete emergency kit of tools and jacks
- changing light globes and fuses
- changing flat tyres

Creating these general outcome parameters helps a trainer to sequence learning activities.

The trainer has begun using a composite skills matrix to ensure that all dimensions of competency are covered and all safety and LL&N considerations are included.

This type of matrix then informs both the planning of delivery sessions and the nature of assessments to be conducted.



Extract from '15 Magic Words'

Skill area:	Task	Task management	Contingency	Environment	Safety	LL&N
Changing a flat tyre	Check that tools and equipment are available	Check type of jack and its suitability for use with vehicles	Have emergency service number available in case equipment not available or does not work	Read the policy on maintaining company vehicles	Ensure that car is off the road and people not endangered	Read the car operators manual
	Check replacement spare	Check spare tyre for roadworthiness	Spare tyre must be fully inflated to psi/kpa limits for car Tyre must not be worn or unsafe	Ensure that emergency service kit has air pressure gauge	Check all tyres for air levels and roadworthiness	Read air gauge and instruction plate in vehicle
	Assemble jack	Check jack for serviceability and stability	Read the car operators manual		Put car in gear and/or chock wheels.	Read the instructions for assembling jack
	Jack up car	Ensure that only correct jack lift points are used	Read the car operators manual		Do not crawl under car which is jacked up	Read the car operators manual
	Remove hub cap and flat tyre	Place nuts in hub cap to ensure that they do not become lost or dirty	Have cross arm wheel spanner in kit to fit different thread sizes		Use correct manual handling techniques	Read the policy on maintaining company vehicles
	Fit tyre and tighten wheel nuts	Replace nuts in opposing pairs to ensure wheel balance	<i>></i>		Ensure that all wheel nuts are tensioned to maximum	
	Refit hub cap	Ensure hub cap is clamped tight to prevent loss in transit				
	Stow all tools, jack and tyre	Tools, jack and tyre to be stowed correctly in vehicle storage				

DEFINING LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT OUTCOMES

Once you have done some basic skills mapping, to determine what has to be covered in the learning program, you can then document more specific learning outcomes. Learning outcomes are related to competency standards in that they say what is to be demonstrated or achieved as the result of the training. However, they may be less formal in language than most competency standards.

If you do this thoroughly, you automatically incorporate the task breakdown required for 'chunking' information to make it easier for trainers and learners to follow and assimilate. For our automotive maintenance program, the learning outcomes will be expressed something like this:

At the end of the program the participants will be able to:

- check that all required tools and equipment are available and serviceable
- render the vehicle unable to move during procedure
- check the replacement spare for safe operating inflation level using a portable air gauge against the tyre pressure specifications for the vehicle from the owners manual
- check the replacement spare for roadworthiness
- demonstrate how to assemble and check a (type) jack for stability
- identify the safe jack points for a given range of motor vehicle using the owner operator manual
- demonstrate safe manual handling and lifting techniques at all times during the procedure
- outline the company policy on maintaining vehicles in roadworthy condition
- identify the essential components of a wheel maintenance kit and how they are stored in the vehicle
- demonstrate how to fit and winch up a jack to a safe working height
- state why it is not safe for anyone to crawl under a vehicle on jacks
- select the appropriate wheel spanner for the size and shape of wheel nut on the vehicle
- remove a hub cap and wheel
- ensure that wheel nuts are placed where they cannot be damaged, lost or dirtied
- fit the spare tightening alternating and opposing nuts to the correct tolerance to ensure optimum wheel balance
- winch down and remove jack slowly to ensure that vehicle remains stable
- disassemble the jack and replace in safety kit

This process was used successfully for many years prior to the introduction of Training Packages to list the skills that were to be trained and assessed in accredited curriculum. They are, in fact, performance criteria couched in everyday language.

Using the 'language of the customer' is very important in training, especially when using standards to develop training outcome and recognition assessments.