

Job Analysis: What's in a Job?

Job analysis is a great place to start when determining the technical skills needed by either your current employees or planned new hires. Listen in as Traci Lepicki (Associate Director of Operations & Strategic Initiatives) and John Moser (Program Lead of DACUM International Training) discuss why our center utilizes the DACUM (Developing A Curriculum) approach to job analysis and how our approach can aid in developing your training program.

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Fara Allen: Welcome to CETE Works, a podcast produced by the Curriculum and Training Team at the Center on Education and Training for Employment—a translational research center on Ohio State's campus. We work where research meets reality. I'm your host, Fara Allen, a Program Coordinator at the Center. Our first series of podcasts focuses on workforce development and will feature discussions about preparing an organization for implementation or modification of a training program. To learn more about our work, you can visit our website CETE.osu.edu, that's C-E-T-E dot O-S-U dot E-D-U. In this episode, we listen in on a conversation between Traci Lepicki and John Moser, as they discuss the importance of Job Analysis in planning a professional development program. Traci is the Associate Director of Operations and Strategic Initiatives and also the Program Director for the Curriculum and Training Team. John is the Program Lead for the DACUM International Training Center, who brings 25 years of experience in his field.

Traci Lepicki: The center of education and training for employment has a long history of job analysis. I'm joined today by John Moser the program lead for our Daikon job analysis Program Area John can we start with you, describing a little bit about what job analysis is in general.

John Moser: Sure. Well, first, Tracy, thank you for inviting us to share this information with listeners basically job analysis is a process that many organizations use to get into the depth of what people do in a job and usually job descriptions are written at a relatively high levels, so they don't provide the details of, you know, what actually goes on what people actually do in their jobs. So, job analysis is a good way to get to the the details so that can be used for developing training programs or for aligning compensation within the organization based on the complexity and other factors in the job. It can be used to develop or update job descriptions or even use to develop standard operating procedures and bring consistency to an organization. So, it has a lot of uses, and it's very common in many companies and colleges.

Traci Lepicki: That sounds like job analysis provides information or serves as an input to tools and procedures that on an organization may need to update or are brand new that need to be implemented in that particular organization. Can you describe for us some of the different types of job analysis?

John Moser: There are different ways that job analysis can be performed. So, for example, I can watch you doing your work and write down what I see and use that as a to analyze your job based solely on that observation. I could also have you record what you do every 20 minutes in a work diary and then I could go back if you were consistent in doing that for a long period of time, I could analyze that and find out you know what it is you do specifically. I might interview you. That would be another way to find out what specifically you do in a job. Another common method is to use a survey and you send the survey out to people and ask them to tell you the 15 or 20 most important things they do in a job and then you compile that information and try to come to some conclusions that way. Those are some of the other methods, besides DACUM.

Traci Lepicki: DACUM and let's talk about that specifically, that's the approach that we use in our center. Let's start with what does take them stand for and then from there, if you could talk about what that process looks like.

John Moser: So, here at the Center on education and training for employment, the become international Training Center is a unit within seed and there aren't a whole lot of providers of DACUM services throughout the world. In fact, there's probably only two or three at this point. And the documentary National Training Center is unique to all of them in that we as our name implies, our international in scope. This process is not used just here in the United States, but it's actually used worldwide by various countries as the basis for developing a lot of their workforce development programs or their competency-based training programs, so that makes us very unique and with a reach it's unlike anyone else, so that's to Ohio State's credit. DACUM is actually an acronym. It stands for developing a curriculum. It was first developed in Canada in the late 60s and early 70s and my predecessor, Dr. Bob North found out about it from Holland College in Prince Edward Island in Canada. And so, he brought some folks down to Ohio State and learned more about the process and was intrigued and so began working with it in probably the mid-70s to really refine it to what it is today. But essentially what it is, it's a method using a panel of experts in a job that you recruit, and those people share with the facilitator what it is they do, the work they perform in terms of duties and tasks. And that information is then posted on a sort of a chart in the front of the room where the group is meeting. And that begins to form a picture of exactly the duties and tasks that the panelists perform. And so, that in turn is going to then serve as the foundation for developing competency-based training. That's the most common use from the DACUM outcomes.

Traci Lepicki: Mentioning competency-based training. My next question is actually related to professional development planning, can you go into a little bit more in depth about how the results of intake of analysis can drive professional development planning?

John Moser: Sure. A lot of times, professional development, training may be based on research or, you know, some some input from different sources. But it never quite hits the mark, if you will, in terms of what people really do in that job. And so, what DACUM does, it takes that expertise of the panel members, and usually there are between six and 10 members of a panel and takes that expertise and captures it and organizes it in a way that clearly defines the units of work that people perform, that in turn serves as a very solid foundation for developing a competency-based training program. So, in turn, that ensures that the training that we're providing people is based specifically on the work that they do. So, it helps to ensure a good alignment and therefore the training is right on target.

Traci Lepicki: So, John, what you just described to me as a great way of explaining CETE's role in translational research. I just heard the idea of taking and moving from a research to practice perspective where really one of the key components in the DACUM process is really focusing on that experience of the subject matter expert, the person on the panel and what the job really looks like in practice very much capitalizing on that aspect of CETE's work. I want to switch gears a little bit and ask you about what does it look like to both perform a daytime job analysis in the context that we're working in right now where many of us are working at home, and maybe not on site as we were in the spring. I want to talk about that a little bit, why maybe DACUM is needed now more than ever. And then what the pandemic has done to impact how we go about doing DACUM.

John Moser: Well for sure. It's the pandemic has had an impact on it. Typically, we would conduct taking workshops, face to face, over the course of two days. So, the facilitator is standing in front of the six to 10 panel members and interacting with them throughout the course

of the two days. So, the pandemic has made it difficult to travel and made it difficult, of course, to get groups of people together. So, we're coming up with ways to conduct that process virtually, so we have six to 10 panelists we connect with one another through a forum like this, using zoom, and basically, we adapt the process to rather than being two days of face to face, we spread it out over multiple days, maybe, four or five days of three hours a day. And so, we can basically still interact with the panel in much the same way we do face to face. Get the same information and still feed it back to them when we're complete so that they can verify the work. So, it just takes a little bit longer and you don't have that benefit of all the nonverbal cues that you pick up on with a face-to-face interaction, but nonetheless it still provides a nice accurate picture of what people are doing. Now with jobs, changing the way they are because of the pandemic either working from home, or in some cases jobs being eliminated and being reorganized, this is a good way to capture now what the new job looks like or what even conceptually you would like that job to look like. So, they can play a key role in being able to put that into a chart that an organization can use going forward.

Traci Lepicki: When you conduct a job analysis, many times, you ask your panelists to describe future trends and concerns, I would imagine that we are right now in the middle of a number of future trends and concerns that maybe didn't appear on charts previously. I know technology is a component that is many times noted by your panelists. Are there other typical enablers and future trends and concerns that show up on a DACUM chart that you think are really driving the need now for new analysis?

John Moser: Sure, technology is probably the one that we hear most consistently that is impacted workers. And for many who are accustomed to using technology previously in their day-to-day work. It's not quite the adjustment it is for the individuals who may not be using a laptop or any other type of technology, day to day in their work. So, it's impacting some people more than others, but in one way, shape, or form, it's impacting everybody to some degree. And I think the other thing that we hear a lot is the uncertainty that arises around the job and the future of the work in an organization, given the pandemic and how that's going to impact the organization in a way that no one really knows yet, at this point in time so that that comes up a lot, but basically, the point of asking the panel members to share that information is so that we can get a sense or provide a sense to the people using this information just what the panel members see as the trends and the concerns that they have today in their work. So, if someone gives it a futuristic look to it certainly adds a real strong dose of reality.

Traci Lepicki: John you've described that there's a role for panelists. The DACUM process, and it's a facilitated process. So, there would be a facilitator or a team lead, so those are two stakeholders that are involved. What are some of the other groups of folks that would be impacted or would have a stake in the DACUM process, either doing the the process itself, or certainly using the results for the next steps?

John Moser: Well, the people involved in the process directly besides the facilitator and the panelists are number one, a recorder, this is the person that records the duties and tasks that the panel members identify has given to the recorder by the facilitator, they record that information on a card that is then placed on the wall, or in the case of a virtual DACUM, is typed into an Excel spreadsheet. The other persons that could be involved would be observers, technically they're not participating in the workshop by sharing what they think, people in that job do, they're strictly observing the process and then at the very end, as we review and refine the work, they may be given an opportunity to ask questions or add any thoughts that they have at that point as well. Those are the internal people that are involved in the process. As far as who uses that, certainly training professionals would use that information, they would be the first folks probably that would get their hands on it to begin to develop competency-based training

programs. Assessment folks may also use it to develop certifications, or to, you know, provide an accreditation for a particular job and its requirements. Compensation and human resources people use it to update job descriptions and assigned salary grades and ranges. So, those are just a few of the stakeholders that find the DACUM data helpful and valuable for various organizational uses. And when I say organizational uses to Traci, I'm referring to not just companies, but colleges, particularly community colleges. We work with lots of them. And then, government agencies and professional organizations, as well find the data outcomes to be helpful for them to so, those are some of the people that use these results for various reasons in their organizations.

Traci Lepicki: John so what I hear you describing is that DACUM is a flexible approach to job analysis. Could you talk a little bit about the different uses of the DACUM process?

John Moser: Sure, Traci, that's one of the nice things about DACUM is that it's very versatile. It can be used in a variety of organizational ways. The most common use of DACUM is to analyze jobs or occupations, and we consider an occupation to be a family of related jobs. That's the most common use of it as a job or occupational analysis method. Beyond that, it can also be used to analyze a process. You may have people from different jobs involved in an organizational process, let's say, new hire onboarding processes or orientation processes and you want to document that, and so you get the stakeholders involved in that process. Another use for it is what we call a functional analysis. Sometimes there's a function of a particular job that cuts across multiple jobs, and so in an instance where you want to capture that common work, if you will, that cuts across multiple jobs, for example, supervising staff is a common function that cuts across a variety of jobs in an organization. If you wanted to analyze just that function of supervising staff, you could get people from different parts of the organization as panel members and then guide the process in a way that would analyze that particular function, so very useful for that, and the other use of it is what we call conceptual analysis. A lot of times when new jobs are emerging, particularly in a community college, they want to be able to prepare workers for those emerging jobs or occupations. One way to do that is to get people together who have a good vision of what that job or occupation, what people in that role will do and have them share that vision. And basically, the facilitator guides that process, whereas rather than asking the panel, what do you do, you're asking them, what would you do if that job existed today. So, they're sharing their conceptual vision and that can be organized in a way that forms the foundation then for, let's say, a community college to be able to develop their curriculum to be able to train people to provide graduates for that area, depending on what the job is. So, it is very versatile and flexible in terms of being able to do a variety of different outcomes.

Traci Lepicki: John, I think that wraps up our conversation. Thank you so much for joining me today to talk about take on that seat.

John Moser: Well, thank you, Tracy, it was a real pleasure sharing about bacon with you today.

Fara Allen: Thank you for taking the time to listen to today! We hope you enjoyed this episode and will share with your colleagues and friends. If you'd like more information on this topic, you can contact us at go.osu.edu\OhioState4Work. See our description for details. Be well and bye for now.