Module 4
Unit 7

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Unit 7: Diagnosing Learning Needs

Module 4: Social Enterprises Human Resources Management

Unit 7: Diagnosing Learning Needs

Entrance

Keywords:

Coaching, Competencies, Quality circles, Workplace instructions

Learning Objective

This unit aims to explain the concept of Diagnosis of Learning Needs, its most important characteristics, as well as those of the Program of Lifelong Learning. Also, in unit 7 we will try to show you the importance of determining the vocational situation in a SE, how to provide a vocational training situation, which competencies it will aim for and, finally, how to develop a strategy to ensure appropriate vocational training at SEs. In the latter, you have to consider not only the present-day individual competencies, but future ones as well. Finally, we will try to show you how to implement workplace analysis, methods of vocational training and strategies for development and personnel planning.

Estimated Time

It should take you about **75 minutes** to go through the entire module. You will need additional time to do the exercises and apply the different tools.

Introduction

Today, it would be unthinkable for an organization to keep itself going without addressing the need for constant investment in training for its staff. Between the constant and rapid technological advancement that we witness, the phenomenon of globalisation and the increased working life expectancy, we are in a situation where training and skills that had previously lingered in the exercise of work need to be constantly updated in today's environment. Therefore, training is crucial enough for the enterprise that the HRM should develop strategies that both fulfil the current learning needs and anticipate future ones. Identification of training needs should consider various skills as required: creative,

methodical, social, and communication as well as the traditional technical ones. This identification starts with examining the levels of training that currently exist in the company. Do note that it is crucially important to include in the process the people directly affected in the analysis and choice of training needs.

When carrying out the analysis of training needs in an enterprise, you should consider the following aspects:
- the analysis of the workplace, i.e. considering the present and the likely future needs and requirements;
- the skill level of the workers of the organisation; you should make a comparison between the qualifications that are considered necessary and those that employees have at present;
- Finally, the decisions taken must consider the long-term outlook and even the motivations of the employees and associates (age, motivation for learning, intellectual requirements, the life of the individual project, and others).

In addition to that, there are several aspects that you should consider when making a diagnosis of the training needs:
- The identification of training measures should be based on a concrete analysis of needs, as the financial resources involved must be well implemented and used. This is especially important for SME and SE organizations.
- You should consider not only the objectives of the SE, but the skills and interests of the associates themselves in order to determine their motivation.
- The training should not be relevant only in terms of the present needs; it must be designed taking into account future considerations as well.

7.1. Assessing the Vocational Training Situation in a Social Enterprise

7.1.1. What does "Vocational Training Situation" mean for a Social Enterprise?

An analysis of the vocational training situation tries to give a positive answer to the several challenges that SMEs and SEs face today. By managing a vocational training program, you should both react soon as possible to market developments and recognize new trends. This means developing new products and new services and finding new markets, competing with rival companies, and introducing aspects of virtual organization in the SME, both in terms of work and in learning structures. On the other hand, appropriate vocational training helps to offer adequate conditions of social security and continuity, especially when it comes to keeping the most qualified employees in the organization. Thus, it becomes relevant in this context of vocational training to be alert to opportunities for individual and organizational development and learning and processes of change.

The vocational training situation in a SE, as in any other enterprise, should be considered at two levels: individual and organizational.

On the individual level, this means that the employees should:
- Receive regular training, especially on the workplace;
- Have their individual training opportunities recognized;
- Seek (and receive) counselling by training consultants, coaches, or training companies - external counsellors on their own activities.

On the organizational level, this means:
- Alignment of organizational structures with personnel development;
- Emphasis on the special nature of employees and involving them in the development of the organization;
- Change from a comprehensive generalist training program to one stressing individual development;
- Creation of structures for learning at the workplace and self-managed learning.

To assess the vocational training situation in a social enterprise, it would be useful to have a tool that provides a means to quickly evaluate the vocational training situation in the organisation. The tool should have questions that deal with the following four subjects:
- Enterprise strategy & training (strategy towards provision of training and development of competencies);
- Training & incentive systems (provision of incentives to encourage improvement of performance skills);
- Learning & the workplace (activities conducive to learning at workplace);
- Collaboration and information processes & competency (collaboration and flow of information within the organisation).

You can implement the above as a questionnaire. It will give you a general overview and hopefully raise questions and support critical thinking amongst management staff. In this way, the questionnaire may reflect about the following topics:

- Training and competencies development;
- Incentives to encourage performance and skills improvement;
- Activities conducive to learning at the workplace;
- Collaboration and flow of information within the organization;
- Important training subjects.

Results will guide you to the section(s) where assessment of training procedures is needed. In addition, you can obtain some background information and further recommendations for those questions or topics where the assessment shows starting points for further training measures and improvements in personnel organisational development.

Follow the link http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hdxmFAxgwmk&feature=relmfu (there are subtitles available at YouTube) and reflect about what the video describes.

Could you list three main reasons for the success of the ARC Angels – Raising Support for Vital Services Provided by ARC Broward?

7.1.2. Why assess Individual Competencies?

No modern organization can function well without continuously providing training to its employees. Your success is tied to the level of investment in training. Thus, you must ensure the future of the organization by providing appropriate training to its personnel. It is, therefore, a priority task for the management to investigate the training needs of the employees and respond with appropriate measures.

There is, however, no single procedure for determining the real training needs. We can only offer you some advice instead:

- Focus on the skills needed in the organization and in a given time period;
- Include creative skills, methodological, social and communication, in addition to the traditional technical requirements;
- Start with the current skill levels of individual employees;
- Include those affected personally in the process of needs analysis and choice of training activities.

Also, you should consider the necessary steps for defining training needs, as follows:

- Analysis of the job in relation to requirements (present and future), qualifications (technical, creative, methodological, socio-communicational), and within the period chosen;
- Analysis of the level of qualification, possessed by a current employee, if necessary, based on a survey of human resources;
- Comparison between the skills needed and those available by the current occupant of the job;
- Decisions made taking into account the long-term planning for the job, and the prospects of the individual concerned (age, motivation for training, prerequisites intellectuals, individual project life, etc.)

An important factor in deciding what measures to take as your chosen approach: the survey of human resources and diagnosis of needs that results in choosing training activities must always presuppose a concrete analysis, since the related financial resources (often scarce, especially in SMEs) must be allocated and used effectively.

When considering the scope of training activities on the individual level, you should start with the strengths and interests of the individual and, if necessary, consider giving them temporarily new and innovative jobs with a change of perspective. The employee then has a personal perspective within the company and valid motivation for training.

Although the organization might be more interested in work-related training that aims to achieve operational objectives, the long-term plans should also feature relevant advanced training in order to safeguard the middle management structure.

Individual career planning has many advantages, especially when times for mutual familiarization and training are not provided, so having an individual plan can be a very helpful tool.

Assessing the issue of transversal individual competencies is very important and should not be overlooked. The competitiveness of a company is determined by its employees. Having qualified employees is not enough – they must be competent too. Competence relates to personal characteristics and capabilities collectively covered the ability of being self-organized in a work situation, i.e. all abilities of the individual to act and to self-organise that enable him to cope with tasks and projects. That is, competencies cover the abilities, skills, methods, knowledge, experiences, attitudes, needs and the values which a person acquires, develops and applies in life and at work.

Which key competences should you consider? We have grouped them in five categories, as below:

Table 1: Key competences

Self-organisation and self-learning competences	Related to the general ability to be active and creative without external involvement: namely, to be reflective concerning oneself, technical and methodical with regards to the ambient conditions and readily communicate with others.
Personal competences	Centered on the ability to view oneself critically and possession of a productive attitude and sense of values.
Activity and action competence	Refers to the ability to master all knowledge, skills and results of social communication, to actively implement personal values and to integrate them with all the other competences.
Technical and methodical competence	Refers to the ability to handle not readily soluble problems in a creative way by proper use of technical and methodical knowledge.
Social-communicative competence	The ability to debate with others from a personal perspective, to cooperate and communicate creatively

7.1.3. Where to implement and develop competences and training?

The example of colleagues is a good way to implement and develop competences among peers. The earlier you recognize the need for further training, the more effective it could be, but, of course, you should recognize the need for further training implies the definition of the state of art of personnel is also individual.

There are different methods of self-training, but you should emphasize three possibilities for the internal training of employees in small organisations: workplace instructions, quality circles and coaching, in order to achieve a better understanding of skill needs in the interest of the organisation and management process.

Where can you develop the working conditions conducive to learning? The term "conducive to learning" means having the conditions and possibilities to enable learning in the work process. Learning processes are consolidated by the application of new knowledge in the work process. Possible errors serve as feedback and can be useful in changing behaviour – so to say, "learning with errors."

Structural changes put pressure on all small businesses and especially SEs to improve. These changes and the subsequent increased complexity of practical tasks puts a heavy load on the learning and innovation potential of employees and executives. However, they have to be open-minded and flexible, to learn and adapt to the many ongoing processes of change in work content in new situations, in order to ensure the development of individual skills and organizational success. This is the only way your organization can remain competitive in the long term - by being able to continuously improve, develop new ideas and implement them into innovative products and services.

At the workplace, training aims to empower individuals to master their practical tasks and deal with processes and changes in the working conditions. In order to increase motivation for further training and, at the same time, ensure that the training meets the requirements, the methods should provide the joint participation of the immediate supervisor and the employee being assessed in the analysis of the training needs. Workplace training is often the responsibility of the organisation itself and has the advantage that employees can benefit from experienced colleagues, who are familiar with all operating conditions and can introduce routine operational work.

Workplace training has multiple advantages, such as:
- Employees gain experience in the skills of self-organisation and self-learning;

- Employees experience the overall capacity to be active and creative as self-organized players – to be reflective about themselves, relate to technical and environmental conditions, and communicate with other people;
- Employees can master the knowledge, skills and results of social communication to actively implement personal values and integrate the with all other skills (i.e. activity and action competence);
- Employees become able to deal with not readily soluble problems in a creative way by proper use of technical and methodological knowledge (technical and methodological skills);
- Employees practice the capacity, whenever it becomes necessary, to assess, measure and develop the skills and methods with appropriate tools.

7.1.4. How to assess Individual Competencies?

In terms of assessing learning needs in SEs, two methods are usually considered: chaired group talk and personal interviews. It is noteworthy that both methods are characterized by facing the issue through the perspective of individuals, and they view the workplace as a whole. It is also worth noticing that there e that employees are well informed about what is being planned to do, which is a motivating factor.

The chaired group talk aims to define the learning need as the gap between the current and the desired situation, namely by proposing training needs analysis to close the gap between the actual and desired situation by determining outcomes of discrepancy.
Training needs can be separated into the following categories:
- **Normative**(those needs are defined by expert members of recognized professional associations or research field);
- **Organizational** (intrinsically related to the role of the organization or institution responsible for the educational activity);
- **Comparative**(represent the gap observed between groups or individuals when they are mutually compared);
- **Demonstrated** (arise from the measured gap between the skills of a professional and those recommended by specialists) and
- **Felt** (consist of the gap between the skills that a professional believes that they possess, those they possess and those they wish to have).

Follow the link http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hdxmFAxgwmk&feature=relmfu (there are subtitles available at YouTube) and reflect about what the video shows – how do you see it now with the new concepts that were presented to you?

Between the constant and rapid technological advancement that we witness, the phenomenon of globalisation and the increased working life expectancy, we are in a situation where training and skills that had previously lingered in the exercise of

work need to be constantly updated in today's environment. Therefore, training is crucial enough for the enterprise that the HRM should make it a priority and take the necessary steps to resolve any problems. Having an analysis of the workplace (both its present and likely future form) and the employee qualifications is quite useful for diagnosis and implementation of the training needs. A Training Needs Analysis can be achieved through methods that also provide information about the competencies and development potential of the individuals.

Do you think that the HRM at your own company is aware of these strategies and methods to assessing the vocational training? What could you suggest to them?

For assessing individual transversal competencies, there is an individual tool available at http://toolkit.tsesme.org/en/0000/0100.html (in Portuguese, Latvian, English and German). You can use it to a quickly assess if (and how) the target competencies profile is matching with the actual profile. The tool is a questionnaire (with 30 questions) addressing generic technical, methodological, communicative and social competences.

Follow the link http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3br9q29ObiY&feature=related (the video is in English) and watch the clip on using competencies successfully.

Do you think that the video discusses the main aspects of using competencies? On the other hand, what aspects would **you** emphasise in the video?

Assessing the issue of transversal individual competencies is very important and should not be overlooked. The competences relate to personal characteristics and capabilities that can be united under the ability to be self-organize at work. We can classify these key competences under five categories: Self-organisation and self-learning competences, Personal competences, Activity and action competences, Technical and methodical competences, and Social-communicative competences.

Of these five transversal competencies, which (or which ones) do you believe should be better improved at your organisation?

7.1.5. Examples

Follow the link http://www.youtube.com/channel/HCLLpwXbX5cf4?feature=relchannel (the video is in English) and watch the clip on using competencies successfully.
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Do you think that the video discusses the main aspects of using competencies? On the other hand, what aspects would you emphasise in the video?

Of these five transversal competencies, which (or which ones) do you believe should be better improved at your organisation?

7.1.6. Summary of Key Points

Assessing the issue of transversal individual competencies is very important and should not be overlooked. The competence relates to personal characteristics and capabilities that take shelter under the ability of self-organized in a work situation. We can group it in five categories: Self-organisation and self-learning competences, Personal competences, Activity and action competence, Technical and methodical competences, and Social-communicative competences.

7.2. Implementing a Simplified Workplace Analysis

To implement a simplified workplace analysis, there are two issues that you must take into consideration. First, there are different areas in which employees may need training. Second, you must also keep in mind the changes in the modern workplace specifics. Most modern companies require additional qualifications that may need new, more complex vocational training and may require greater organisational knowledge, more independence, and self-initiative and cooperative learning and working from their personnel. This process is much more effective when employees are also involved in it, whether through group discussions, through appraisal interviews with external experts, or if analyses of activities are frequently done to support the decision making process.

7.2.1. What is a workplace analysis?

The implementation of simplified workplace analysis implies that new requirements for available workplaces result in a technical progress, economic growth and, in the end, also social change – the objective of most social enterprises. Training should be implemented in the areas listed below:

Table 2: Areas of implementation of the simplified workplace analysis

Technical area	You will be expected to provide: - Changes and innovations, new products and services; - An improvement in terms of quality assurance; - The possibility to make several changes (machinery, processes and materials) in labour organisation;
Commercial area	- Enlarged customer base; - Continuous search for market niches; - Improved customer care; - Basic work to provide for a better marketing (better presentation,

	image to the public); - Introduction of new merchandising software (to use the new possibilities of merchandising that new technologies makes available)
Management area	- Development of a corporate culture, considering the company growth; - Changes in enterprise targets and structures; - Wider cooperation with new partners and public relations with special emphasis on the staff management and motivation;
Personal area	- Guaranteed introduction of new employees, assure a personnel expansion, release and assessment.

Follow the link http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TXozhFc1Oi8&feature=related (the video is in English) and watch the clip about Know who to ask or where to go to solve workplace problems.

Do you believe that the explanations in the video could be useful for your enterprise?

7.2.2. Why use the methods of Vocational Training?

The training activities especially in the organization ensure that practical skills are acquired and learned directly in the workplace. But it is not always possible to perform the exercises in real work processes. The specific characteristics of their workplaces should also be taken into account. The exercises are only effective if the teaches and learners conduct them in a systematic way from the simple to the complex, from easy to difficult, from slow to quick work and focus on quality instead of quantity. There are several self-training methods available for employees, but it is common sense to consider these three possibilities for small enterprises:

Workplace instructions: when creating these, the determining questions are:
- To what end is the training being designed?
- What should be learned?
- How and with what media should learning and teaching proceed?
- Where and when should the learning take place?
- How should the process be supervised?

The results of the questions will lead to four steps of training: 1. Demonstration; 2. Imitation; 3. Solo practice; and 4. Joint assessment.

Quality circles: volunteer group of workers employees and a leader that focus on concrete operational problems and try to find out satisfactory solutions that improve the performance of the organisation and enrich the quality of life at

workplace. It is important to follow a methodical procedure: it starts with the leader explaining the problem, recording suggestions always under principles, such as quantity before quality, there are no limits to fantasy, no criticisms of other's suggestions, and participants respect the group performance. In addition, in order to be considered, suggestions must be structured and summarized, but they should be evaluated and weighted according to their feasibility and practicability. In the end, the managing directors in the enterprise are informed of the results of the consultation in the quality circle.

Coaching: This is the practice of providing support and advice to an individual or group, aiming to help them recognize their weaknesses and improve their performance. For instance, there is coaching in leadership, teamwork, sales, communication, goal setting, and strategic planning, among others. It can be done on a one-to-one basis, in group sessions and in seminars. Even though it is common for an enterprise to think about coaching when it has lower levels of performance, coaching is becoming recognized as useful for enterprises with high levels of performance as well. Coaching could be done by external experts, or it can be a task for the senior leaders.

The basic tasks of coaching are familiarization with a new workplace, preparation for new executive tasks, development of a new concept of quality, improvement of a product or procedure, vocational adjustments, training of employees, or even preparation of a moderator of a quality circle. The qualities of the coach will be lost, however, if the employees being coached are not motivated to learn, are not in harmony with the rest of the group or, above all, do not want to recognize and contribute to the solutions and processes of change. Coaching is a longer-term process and has a higher degree of personal responsibility. It emphasises contact between coach and group, including trust among the involved, result-oriented techniques, and results and conclusions being discussed and agreed among the partners. A good coach gives only the necessary and never as much as possible, and knows that his or her place is in the background, more as a consultant than as a leader.

Follow the link http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YoxCsmNJmac&feature=related in YouTube (translated version available). This video was recorded after a coaching session with Richard Elwell to describe how the process works. If you enjoy it, you may also do the free EQ test at www.richard-elwell.com.

Did the video help you to understand how coaching can function, in particular at your own SE? Justify your answer.

7.2.3. Where to apply the results of a training plan?

The analysis of training needs should have its follow-up in workshops that develop concrete measures for competence development and achieving the objectives as the way to the

individual development of operational fields. You can also consider other measures for the development of competences, such as:

- **On-the-job training** (project management, applications in other tasks, traineeship in other tasks, job rotation, coaching, managements conferences, exchange fields requiring intercultural competence);
- **Learning by teaching** (presentations, introduce new tasks to new employees, preparation and management of events, taking over coaching functions);
- **Self-directed learning** (with media-supported programmes, literature studies, conferences, workshops, fairs);
- **Internal/external further learning** (professional competence, methodical competence, behaviour competence, leadership skills, information technology).

Follow the link http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x1rXaDdCmTc (available in English in YouTube). Watch the video on developing a method and concept for developing skills and competencies.

Did the video help you to understand the importance of developing competencies, especially at your own SE? Justify your answer.

7.2.4. How to develop and apply a Planned Vocational Training Based on Identified Learning Needs

SME and SEs are facing various challenges, and it becomes more and more important not only to diagnose learning needs, but also to plan vocational training based on the needs you identify. Your plan has to allow you the flexibility to react to developments on the market and to recognize trends. This way, you can pass over the results of the identified learning needs, develop new competencies, abilities, and skills, and propose new products and new services.

A prerequisite for successful planning of vocational training based on identified learning needs is that executives and employees alike see it as an individual opportunity for self-development and learning. At the individual level, this translates into regular learning, primarily at workplace; recognition of one's training needs; personal search of training opportunities, and seeking consultation (via training consultants, coaches, personnel developers, training providers) on one's own initiative. At the enterprise level, it means alignment of the enterprise structures along the goal of personnel development, with emphasis to the special character of the employees and utilizing them more fully for the development of the SE.

Planning vocational training based on identified learning needs requires the learning of new concepts, new forms of learning, realization of complex teaching/learning arrangements with practical problem definitions, promotion of

self-reliance and self-organisation in learning, and higher emphasis on learning in groups. This assures a strong dissemination by application of the acquired abilities in other learning processes. Knowledge has to be built up in concrete situations from personal experience and trainers have to create the conditions for self-organisation in learning.

Planning vocational training carries an implication that competencies are more than qualifications gained from professional study; thus, you have to consider abilities, skills, methods, knowledge, experiences, attitudes, needs and values acquired as well. A plan has to consier that competencies are determined either from the person or from the situation. The core competencies have three functions for individuals: they enable orientation (knowing one's own strengths and having experienced them in different real life situations drives professional development); enable continuity (the individual keeps the core competencies, independent of the kind of work); and form the basis for technical qualifications (a core competency can only be used in a certain technical context).

When planning vocational training, you should be conscious that employees can best acquire competencies in relation to certain situations. You should consider adding suitable experiences and situations to the working process during the further vocational training to promote the acquisition of new competences. The acquisition of the competency to adapt can for example be promoted by confronting employees with changing situational requirements and new roles that will conduce to learn new tasks.

During strategy development, you should always consider what objectives must be achieved, what plans should be standard for decisions in the company, and the objectives of the plan that you intend to implement through this strategy. Therefore, a strategy should consider the behavioural and cultural structure of the company.

To implement a plan of training needs, it is important that you base it on a strategy with an initial position, an objective, and measures that achieve the aims. When you determine the further training needs, you should base your decision on the objectives and the measures foreseen to fulfil the targets according the following questions:
- Does experience of innovation exist?
- Do ideas already exist?
- Should the task be assigned to external sources?
- Do we have any innovation techniques?
- Do we have any risk avoidance methods?
- Do we have experience in launching new products?
- In which area does a high error ratio appear?
- Why have the errors not already been rectified?
- What counter-measure have we applied before?

This way, you can recognize where and under what circumstances will further training be needed.

The strategy should involve every employee and all sectors and must answer fundamental questions in sectors such as strategic market orientation, structural organisation and workflow management, personnel planning, communication and information systems, enterprise culture and corporate identity.

Table 3: Sectors involved in training strategy

Strategic Market Orientation	Which criteria would help to identify segments of the customers as target groups? Which potential customers does the enterprise have already and what new ones should we develop? With which customers can we assure long-term yield-oriented growth?
Structural Organisation and Workflow Management	How should our structures and workflow ensure growth, flexibility and innovation? Have the employees the need freedom to develop the tasks?
Personnel Planning	Do we know the future need for employees? Are requirement profiles for each employee available? How is special performance remunerated?
The Communication and Information System	Can we guarantee free interdepartmental transfer of information? Do employees have access to this communication?
Enterprise Culture and Corporate Identity	How does the phenotype support the enterprise culture? What roles does customer orientation play in the enterprise culture?

7.2.5. Examples

Follow the link http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TTMV20gfL5o&feature=plcp – Herman Rompuy: Video address to the participants of the ETF conference on entrepreneurship (English subtitles) and see the YouTube video about vocational training and labour markets from the EU perspective.

How important do you feel these policies are at your SE? Justify your answer.

At your own SE, do you believe that a strong plan for vocational training based on identified learning needs has been developed? Which aspects of your plan do you

consider as better, and where do you have weaknesses? Please justify your answer.

7.2.6. Summary of Key Points

Your enterprise should be able to design a plan that answers the results of the identified learning needs, develops new competencies, abilities, and skills, and proposes new products and new services. A prerequisite for successful planning of vocational training based on identified learning needs is that executives and employees alike see it as an individual opportunity for self-development and learning. Planning vocational training based on identified learning needs requires the learning of new concepts, new forms of learning, realization of complex teaching/learning arrangements with practical problem definitions, promotion of self-reliance and self-organisation in learning, and higher emphasis on learning in groups. This assures a strong dissemination via application of the acquired abilities in other learning processes. When planning vocational training, you should be conscious that employees can best acquire competencies in relation to certain situations. You should consider adding suitable experiences and situations to the working process during the further vocational training to promote the acquisition of new competences.

Summary of Learning Objective

In this unit, you learned about the importance of diagnosing learning needs, how to develop assessment of the vocational training in a social enterprise and about skills assessment tools. You have also learned about the importance of determining future training needs, methods for vocational training and how to plan vocational training based on identified learning needs.

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Links for the Unit 7

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http://www.youtube.com/channel/HCLLpwXbX5cf4?feature=relchannel
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TXozhFc1Oi8&feature=related
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YoxCsmNJmac&feature=related
www.richard-elwell.com
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x1rXaDdCmTc
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NoC-CFxMA9k
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SyUVWyvNLnU
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TTMV20gfL5o&feature=plcp

Glossary of the Unit

Competencies: This term comprises all abilities of the individual to act and to self-organise that enable him to cope with tasks and projects (i.e. those related to the situation and the persons concerned). Competencies cover the abilities, skills, methods, knowledge, experiences, attitudes, needs and the values which a person acquires, develops and applies in life. They are bound to the individual and his ability to act self-responsibly. Competences always have to be described in relationship to the requirements on a person and his individual abilities or potential. In order to evolve, competences depend on the conditions in the environment. The development of competences results from individual learning and development processes and different forms of learning at work and in everyday life. They do not include only the acquisition or adaptation of knowledge and abilities; the most important part is the readiness to test one's experience as well as the self-organised further development of the action competence that justifies new requirements and tasks. Other essential elements include the ability and motivation for self-organised learning and acting and the capacity for further development of other technical, methodical, social and personal competences.

Coaching: Coaching is increasingly used as accompaniment to measures for operational work in the field of company training. As a new learning form, it aims to promote individuals in their personal and vocational developments, also to support groups. Coaching aims to reflect individual and collective developments, to enable processes of change and self-knowledge and to change behaviour.

Quality circles: Volunteer group of workers employees and a leader that focus on concrete operational problems and try to find out satisfactory solutions that improve the performance of the organisation and enrich the quality of life at workplace. It is important to follow a methodical procedure: it starts with the leader explaining the problem, recording suggestions always under principles, such as quantity before quality, there are no limits to fantasy, no criticisms of other's suggestions, and participants respect the group performance. In addition, in order to be considered, suggestions must be structured and summarized, but they should be evaluated and weighted according to their feasibility and practicability. In the end, the managing directors in the enterprise are informed of the results of the consultation in the quality circle.

Workplace instructions: When creating workplace instructions for vocational training, the determining questions are: to what end is the training being designed; what should be learned; how and with what media should learning and teaching proceed; where and when should the learning take place, and how should the process be supervised?