**Assignment #1**

**“Closing a Performance Gap”**

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**PART 1:**

**NEEDS ASSESSMENT:**

According to Webster’s Dictionary an Educator is “one skilled in teaching” (Merriam-Webster, 2011). It seems almost impossible to find one definition that details the proper way of teaching. A way that encompasses how everyone learns, one that doesn’t bind people by time or place, and one that doesn’t discriminate. There are several theories and thus several personalized theories of education. All educators have one common goal and that is bringing new material to an audience. It makes no difference whom the audience is the goal remains the same; to actively teach people. The audience (learner) is absolutely an important component. It is important to understand who your learners are, their views on education and what their priorities are. In the 21st century we have at our disposal several teaching techniques. It is common to find women at a disadvantage, as they have taken on the lead as caregivers and have entered the workplace themselves. According to Tisdell (1998) Canadian women often cannot pursue their educational goals due to bounds of place and time. What this means is that they cannot make the time to take the courses when they are offered. The timing of the courses doesn’t work for them, or they are bound by place where they cannot get to the facilities where the courses are being offered.

The organization that I have decided to examine a little closer is one that I have worked with for several years. The Girl Guides of Canada as the name states is an organization designed for women by women. There are millions of members worldwide. I have been a member of the Girl Guides of Canada for over 20 years. Ten of those years have been as an adult member. As a volunteer with this organization it is my responsibility to take all the courses that I am needed to take. This is where the problem often starts, there is no flexibility! Women of this organization often find themselves bound by time and place. All of these courses are very out dated as well. When I can make it to a course, I rarely get anything I can use.

As there is currently already a learning course in action I would focus on “closing a performance gap”. I feel these courses could be more production and could generate more funds for this organization. Although these are not courses offered in a Post-Secondary Institution I feel they can benefit from an Instructional Design over haul.

1. ***Describe the different needs assessment approaches. Which do you propose to use and why is it appropriate for your project?***

In Distance Education there are five basic need assessment approaches.

**Academic Arm-Chair Approach**: This is a more laid back approach where no needs analysis is conducted. This approach uses the theory that “things are fine the way they are”. Students will take the courses that are offered by the Universities.

**Job-Skills Approach**: This approach is more common in smaller post-secondary institutions (Vocational schools and colleges). This approach focuses on what skills are needed to do industry work. The focus is on what employers are looking for when they hire freshly graduated students.

**Revenue Generating Approach**: Just as the name states the need is to create a revenue stream. It examines what courses are in high demand, what courses could generate a profit.

**Labour Market Approach**: This approach focuses on what the job market is like now, and what projections are expected. It tries to forecast what training/skills will be needed in the future and what is in high demand now.

**Mixed Approach**: Obviously just as the name indicates this approach uses a variation of any of the above mentioned Approaches. Most studies would likely benefit from a mixture of these approaches so it is fair to state that this would be the most popular. In a time of shrinking budgets and more stakeholders needing to be answered to all approaches likely consider what would generate revenue.

For my project I would like to use a Mixed Approach. I definitely see value in a couple of the Approaches. I feel together they would best represent what I am trying to accomplish. I would use the Revenue Generating Approach as I feel there are courses that should be offered as they would generate revenue for the Girl Guides of Canada. Enrichment courses offered at a low rate would definitely be beneficial to all leaders. A non-profit organization like the Girl Guides of Canada can definitely use the funds towards programs for girls. I would also want to use the Labour Market Approach and apply it to this problem. I feel this would be beneficial as it could rely on what courses are currently popular, and how to improve them. Also creating programs that could be used in the future for areas such as ‘camping’, ‘social media awareness’ and ‘becoming a teen’. Currently these three areas of the Guiding program offer little training for adult members to pass onto their Guides.

1. ***You need to substantiate the scope and extent of the need with data***
   1. ***Who would you choose to query in your needs assessment and why?***

I would query current adult members of the Girl guides of Canada. I would ask them questions pertaining to the current situation of trainings and how they feel they can improve. I would also query the parents of Girl Members – get a feel for what they think as well. What they would like to see incorporated into the program.

* 1. ***Describe how you would go about doing this (eg. Survey, interviews)?***

As I would be working with the Girl Guides of Canada I would submit a survey in the monthly Newsletter that is distributed to all Adult members. This newsletter is distributed via e-mail and mail depending on how the member wanted to receive it. Through e-mail I would have a link so members to simply be navigated to the appropriate site. Through paper newsletters I would offer the link to the appropriate survey page. For Parents I would distribute the survey in the same way through regional newsletters which the parents of all girl members receive.

* 1. ***Give 2 examples of the type of questions would you ask participants of your needs assessment?***

I would ask them a series of questions where they would have to rank their answer on a scale of 1 – 5. Where 1 would be “unsatisfied” and 5 would be “satisfied”. I would arrange this section of questioning first to get participants to think about how they feel and prompt them to think about the subject and survey topic. Questions meeting this category would include:

How do you feel about the current trainings that are being offered? 1 2 3 4 5

Were you satisfied after your last training? 1 2 3 4 5

I would then ask them open ended questions where they could give as much feedback as necessary. A question meeting this requirement for this needs assessment would be:

What program areas would you like to see more trainings on?

Do you think the current trainings could be improved? If so how?

* 1. ***What other sources of data should you use (reports, observations, standards)***

I would use current statistics on how many trainings are available to adult members. How many members take the trainings. I would also want to look into how many adults do not take any trainings – and perhaps gear a specific survey towards them questioning why they do not take any trainings. What members really want.

1. ***A need is a gap between what is and what is desired. What problem or need have you identified? What are its causes?***

The performance gap I have noticed within the Girl Guides of Canada is that there seems to be a lack of attendance on Adult Member Trainings. For all levels of the Girl program adult members need to be certified by the Girl Guides of Canada to proceed with activities. Such as backpacking, tent camping and even residential camping. Currently there are several groups within Calgary that do not partake in these activities as their leaders do not have the proper training. As a member myself I have spoken to several other leaders and it seems the reason for this is that the Trainings are only offered once a year and they are outdated and boring. Trainings often last 8 hours when they could likely be condensed into a three hour period. Currently the cause of this is outdated material, unorganized mentors/trainers and the binds of time and place.

1. ***Describe the potential solutions to the problem or need.***
   1. ***How might instruction resolve (or help to resolve) this problem?***

I believe there needs to be an improvement on the instruction that is currently being offered. I also believe that newer program components, need to have instruction/training courses available for adult members. Some older members don’t understand Social Media Awareness enough to teach children about it effectively. Knowledge is power, this problem can easily be fixed by equipping Adult Members with the power to teach and mentor youth members.

* 1. ***What non-instructional solutions (e.g. Job aids, task engineering..) might also be used?***

Some non-instructional solutions that I believe could fix this problem is more support from Districts/Regional offices. Perhaps have some mentors set up to aid new leaders perform the best that they can. Educate leaders on what trainings are available and listen when they are having problems. Sometimes being a leader is overwhelming. With or without proper trainings perhaps less leaders would quit if they had someone whom they could turn to.

**PART 2**

1. ***What course or program would meet the need(s) expressed or would address the problem? Describe the components of the course or problem, i.e., the topics it will cover, and the major activities it will involve.***

If I were to pick a branch of Guiding to work on it would be the Guides, as I am more familiar with their program. One of the program work areas is on Social Media Awareness. Currently this section has no material for leaders, trainings or support. I would want to focus on this component as I feel it is really important amongst the girls of this age group (9-11 year olds). I would want to offer this course online for all members. The cost would be $5 (which is the cost of all other trainings). I would offer current relevant information in a format that would not be challenged by traditional time and place bounds. I feel this would encourage more members to take this course – under their own terms when and where they are available. Units I would focus on would be

Unit 1: The Dangers of Social Media

Activity: Independent Research. Look for current news articles on the Dangers of Social Media. How closely does it hit home?

Unit 2: Facebook

Activity: Create a Private Facebook Page for your Guide Unit. Invite the girls with Facebook to Join.

Unit 3: Twitter

Activity: Create a private Twitter Account for your Guide Unit. Invite the girls with Twitter to join.

Unit 4: Instragram

Activity: Create a private Instragram Account for your Guide Unit. Invite the girls with Instragram to join.

Unit 5: How to protect yourself.

Activity: Create a pledge that you and your girls can commit to.

Unit 6: How to protect your friends and family.

Activity: Create an outline for a unit activity in regards to this unit topic that you could incorporate into a unit meeting.

Unit 7: What should you do if you need help?

Activity: Create a lesson plan for your unit in regards to this topic. Call your local police station and inquire if they have any presentations available or can offer a uniformed police officer to come as a guest speaker.

1. ***Describe the characteristics of the learner population for whom the course or program will be designed. Integrate material from the Smith and Ragan (2005) text or other readings to add support to your answer.***

Two broad categories of human characteristics to consider when designing instruction are individual differences and similarities (Smith & Ragan, 2005). First I will exam the Differences;

* Most Adult Members are between the ages of 18-75 meaning there is quite a significant age differences between all members.
* Family lives would be very different. Some women would have families, some would be single, with or without kids. All women within this organization are without a doubt in different places in their familial life.
* A major difference would be where these women are within their careers. Some would be in Post-Secondary while others would be quite advanced in their careers. Some would be managing work and school.

The most notable similarities would include;

* Volunteer work. All women would share the need and value of volunteering within their communities. This volunteer position would not be the primary focus for several of these women.
* They would all enjoy working with the youth, in a program where they feel is capable of teaching young girls skills.

1. ***Describe the context in which the course or program will be delivered. How will the course/program be delivered? Integrate material from the Smith and Ragan (2005) text or other readings to add support to your answer***.

I would choose to delivery this training course via the internet, in a moodle type forum. The Girl Guides of Canada has a LMS system which is already in use. I would use this as my platform and expand on it. I would be able to track what courses were being taken by which members. It would be important to track the progress of members, and ensure they were credited with trainings they had completed. I would want to ensure that everyone would be able to easily access the training, and navigate it with ease. At the end of each unit I would have a test so learners could gauge their learning. If there was an area they didn’t do well in they could go back and look it over. According to Smith and Ragan (2005) an important part of the learning process is attitudes. People can typically retain information better if they are able to connect to themselves personally as in within a personal experience. I would have reflection questions that would prompt learners to draw from their own experiences. Tie in the unit to their own experiences. As I have mentioned I would want to deliver this program online in a Moodle or LMS type learning platform. I would want to offer these courses as PowerPoint Presentations were learners could print them off and take them with them with ease. I feel this is a method that would allow me to incorporate several other tools such as audio, video, pictures, diagrams, links to other internet site and of course valuable information they can print off and take with them for future use. I would really want to incorporate and include group forums or a chat room. I would make this available in the LMS portion of the Girl Guides of Canada site. As stated by Cannon and Griffith (2007) adults learn best in a participatory and collaborative environment. There would be certain forums for certain topics. I would hope ideally that learners would be prompted to share their personal guiding experiences and knowledge. It is through constant learning and experience that we can learn what works best in what environments.

1. ***Finally, following the guidelines listed below, identify a topic or subject area for a unit of instruction or learning object that is part of the course or programme describe above. Clearly describe how your instructional product fits within the course or program.***

I would want to design the course on a PowerPoint form to make is easy to navigate for all users. I feel this method will also be compatible with more systems. PowerPoint Presentations will still work on slower working systems. I would want to design the “Social Media Awareness” component of the Girl Guide Program. The Girl Guides has a program outline for this topic, however there are no guidelines, instruction or materials for leaders. I would want to design a training module that would be available for leaders to learn how to present this area of the program with their unit. I feel as though some leaders do not know how to address this topic as they are themselves not familiar with Social Media.

References:

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