

## Assignment 3.1: Performance Problem Analysis

1. Describe in detail what type(s) of information is(are) received from problem analysis and how does the instructional designer apply the information to guide solution design.

During Performance Problem Analysis, the instructional designer or whoever else is analyzing the problem, must first describe the problem and determine the severity of the problem. If the problem is deemed to be serious, or strongly tied to negative outcomes, then the problem analyst must try to uncover the cause of this problem. For example, a performance problem could be caused by a lack of skill, a lack of knowledge, or a lack of motivation. The cause of the problem will determine what kind of interventions will be implemented. If the problem is determined to be a lack of knowledge or skill, the next question would be whether the person used to know the information, or used to know how to perform the task, in which case a simple refresher or opportunity for extra practice might be sufficient. However, if the person has never been exposed to the information or been taught the skill, a more formal training would be necessary. On the other hand, if the problem does not result from a lack of skill or knowledge, there might be emotional or environmental factors at play which the intervention would need to address.

2. Think about one performance problem and describe it. How can you analyze the performance problem to design a solution using the problem analysis flowchart?

One performance problem that comes to mind is my own. Since the pandemic has changed the face of many industries, closed bars and restaurants, and left many unemployed, I have been helping my partner to launch her own culinary business, [Bountiful Bites By Michelle \(Links to an external site.\)](#). While she is a formally-trained chef with ample restaurant experience, I have very limited restaurant experience (mostly as a server, prep cook, and dishwasher) and am not used to the extremely time-sensitive nature of kitchen work. While I try my best to be a good helper, I often find myself wasting time on activities that are not pertinent to the task at hand. I am a very thorough and detail-oriented person who tends to get sidetracked by seemingly important tangents. While these might be good traits in a teacher or instructional designer (I hope), they are not usually productive in the kitchen. So, my performance problem is not always being able to prioritize tasks in a time-sensitive work environment. To analyze this problem according to the problem analysis flowchart would look something this:

## Performance Problem Analysis

1. Is the problem important? Yes.
2. Is the problem the result of a skill deficiency? Yes, time management under different circumstances is a skill.
3. Did the person (me) used to do it? Yes, when I worked in restaurants in the past I had better time management skills
4. Were the skills used often? Yes, but not recently.

According to the flowchart, this would indicate that the most appropriate intervention would probably be to arrange practice and feedback. However, I have ample opportunity to practice and trust me, I get plenty of feedback. In that case, I think it would be wise to explore possible environmental or emotional factors involved with the performance problem. In my opinion, which is questionable given that I am discussing my own performance problem, my poor performance may be tied to the environmental factors associated with working from home. Unlike in the traditional work environment, a place that the worker occupies only temporarily and likely does not feel a strong sense of ownership over, when working from home and cooking out of our own kitchen, it is much easier to get distracted by peripheral tasks that are not related to the most pressing task of getting the food out on time. For example, when working at a restaurant that was not in my own home I never had the experience of walking past and getting distracted by a pile of clean laundry that I had been meaning to fold, or a stack of mail that I had been meaning to go through, because those distractions were simply not present in the work environment. Similarly, there are also emotional factors involved, given that my "boss" in this case is also an intimate partner and (somewhat) less likely to fire me for poor performance. Based on this analysis, I think the most successful interventions would be those that address the emotional and environmental factors associated with working from home and having a "boss" that is also an intimate partner.

3. Think about a specific problem that you have in mind for a possible job aid (JAI). Using the flow chart, analyze if a job aid is appropriate and how the job aid can be designed (layout, structure, etc)

Thinking about the previously mentioned performance problem, I believe that some job aids could be helpful. Specifically, some visual reminders might help me remember that during certain times my home becomes my workplace and my partner becomes my boss. Also, some checklists of priority tasks to complete before moving on to other things would be helpful. I think that, like any job aid, these should be clearly visible, attention-grabbing, and easy to follow. In this case, a job aid is useful because it would not damage my credibility and would help me to perform the necessary tasks faster. After developing the habit of effective time management the job aids may eventually become unnecessary, but in the meantime they will be helpful.