

VHA Learning Leader & DLO Competency Model



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4 Learning Leader Areas of Expertise

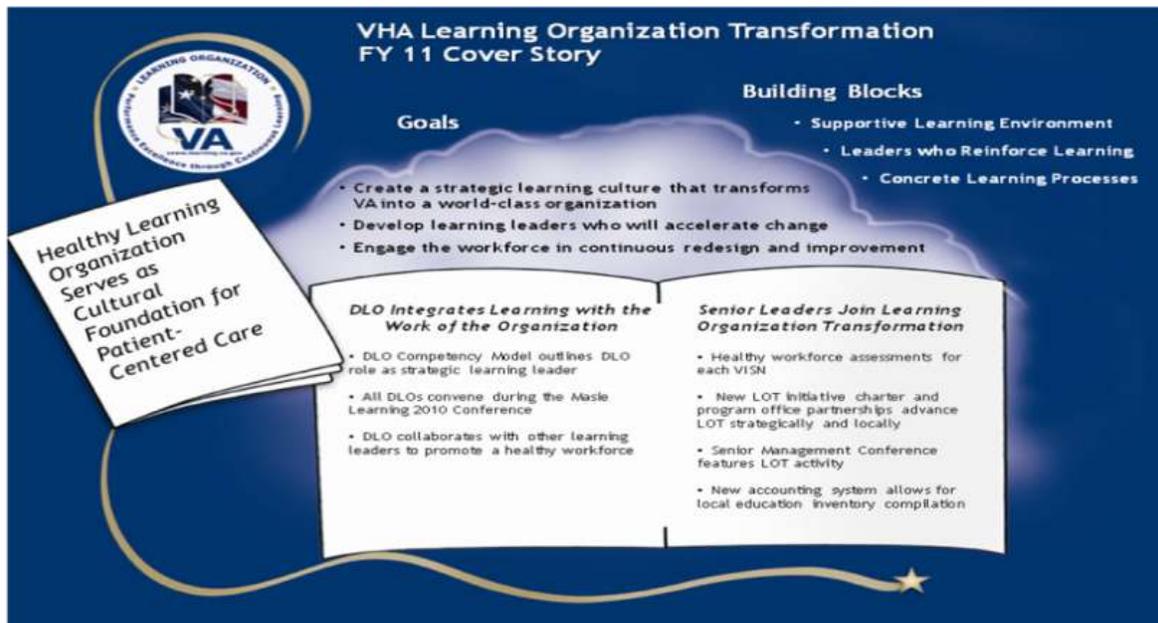
8 DLO competencies

Version date: 10/19/2010

Learning Leader and DLO Competency Project Overview

The purpose of the Learning Leader Competency Project is to assist VHA in identifying the critical skills and competencies required of Learning Leaders (including DLO, DEO roles) in order to achieve the organization's goal of becoming a learning organization.

Learning Organization Transformation



In November of 2007, VHA endorsed a long-term transformational performance goal to “distinguish VHA as a Learning Organization” (referred to as the T4 Measure). The goal is aimed at transitioning VHA from the current state of traditional, mandatory and compliance driven education to one that integrates learning into the work the organization and drives performance.

VA as a Learning organization supports the cultural change necessary to bring VA to a new service delivery system! One of the first steps in implementing the T4 Measure was for facilities and VISN's to appoint a “Designated Learning Officer (DLO).” The DLO is the primary liaison and representative to the larger VISN and national efforts related to the transformational measure. The role of the DLO is to provide leadership within the facilities, integrate and align the functions, as well as facilitate a culture change and creation of a synergist learning environment for all staff.

Because the role of DLO in VHA is new and has not existed in the past, early efforts such as this competency project are aimed at continuing to provide guidance in defining the role, communicating the function, and positioning the role to achieve desired outcomes.

Although one of the driving forces for this project was prompted by the new DLO role, other learning leaders (such as the Designated Education Officer – DEO) working across VHA is equally critical to supporting the transformational goal. This will ensure alignment, collaboration across the learning function, and learning leaders at all levels of the organization.

Learning Organization Transformation Strategy and the Learning Leader Framework

To meet the VHA learning organization transformation strategy and drive the change required, learning leaders are needed at all levels of the organization. Through a series of focus groups, benchmarking and research, 4 Areas of Expertise were identified for learning leaders as critical to the success of VHA transformation. It is therefore suggested that all supportive learning roles (DLO, DEO, etc.) be aligned with these Areas of Expertise.

VHA Learning Organization Transformation Vision:

VA's commitment to developing and sustaining a workforce and culture that embraces learning in everyday business practices can enhance the expertise for Veterans, their families and our employees. The building blocks of a healthy learning organization serve as the roadmap for transforming VA into a patient-centered organization where employees want to work and Veterans want to receive services.

The Learning Organization building blocks include:

- (1) Create a supportive learning environment,
- (2) Adopt learning practices and processes,
- (3) Ensure that supervisors and leadership reinforce learning.



Learning Organization Strategy:

Healthy organizations enable employees at all levels to actively improve their work environment. The workforce of a learning organization continuously gathers, interprets, retains and transfers knowledge. It purposefully modifies behaviors based on new knowledge and insights, and develops strategies that are aligned with VA priorities to enhance organizational performance.



DLO strategy to support Learning Organization Transformation:

In our journey to culturally transform the VA into a learning organization the DLO provides leadership and expertise in integrating learning with the work and operations of a veteran centered healthcare system. In partnership with organizational leaders, the DLO executes outcome-based learning strategies, processes and practices that promote a supportive learning environment and result in organizational health.

Learning Leader 4 Areas of Expertise

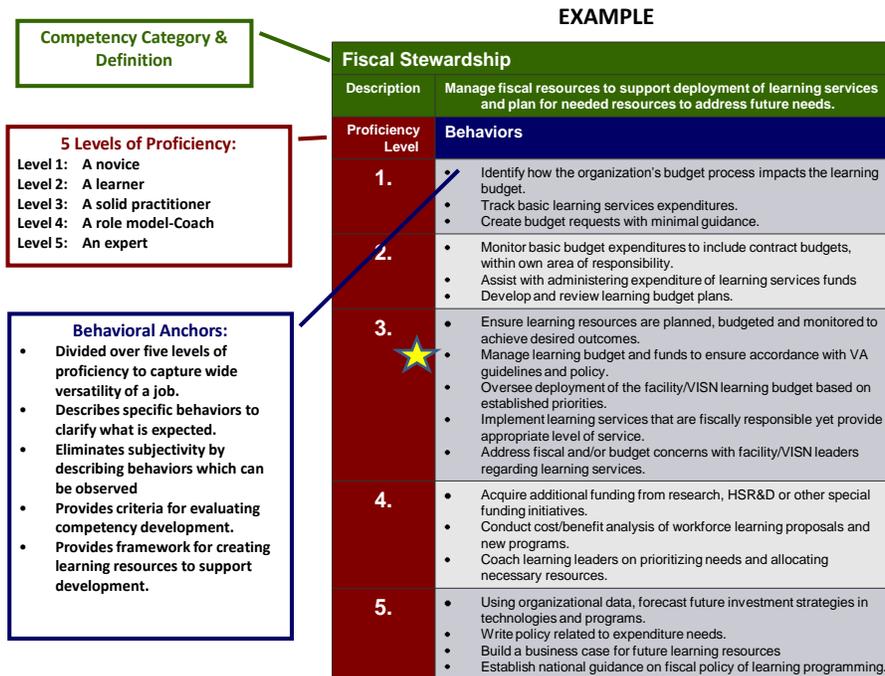


8 DLO Competencies



The DLO Competency Model Structure

Competency Model—an inventory or catalog of competencies required by an organization to accomplish its strategy.



Behavioral Indicators (5 levels of proficiency)

Level 1 Novice	Level 2 Learner/Apprentice	Level 3 Journeyman/ Practitioner	Level 4 Role Model/Coach	Level 5 Expert
Explain/Describe	Help/Assist	Do/Implement	Teach/Coach	Create/Develop
Is: Someone new or relatively unskilled in this competency	Is: Someone who needs help to perform in this competency	Is: Someone who performs quite well in this competency, and only occasionally may need help	Is: Someone who performs very well in this competency and can assist and coach others.	Is: A "rare professional" who "wrote the book" on this competency. Provides break-through thinking or performance.
Narrow	→			Broad
Local	→			Global
Simple	→			Complex
Tactical	→			Strategic
Novice	→			Expert



1. Learning Transformation Leadership:

Definition: Translates a learning organization vision into action and promotes practices that support integrating learning with work.



2. Strategic Planning:

Definition: Operates from a systems perspective in setting clear learning goals and develops learning and performance strategies aligned with the organization's strategic and operational plans.

1. Learning Transformation Leadership:

Definition: Translates a learning organization vision into action and promotes practices that support integrating learning with work.

Level One – Novice (Someone new or relatively unskilled in this competency)

- Describe examples of successful change strategies associated with a learning culture.
- Identify learning opportunities that support integrating learning with work practices.
- Articulate the behaviors and performance outcomes of a learning organization.
- Develop self to acquire skills and knowledge to become a learning leader.

Level Two – Learner/Apprentice (Someone who knows the basics but needs help to perform in this competency)

- Work with the learning leaders on how to lead learning organization transformation efforts in their areas of control.
- Identify just in time learning opportunities that can be applied in the work setting.
- Investigate opportunities for enhancing learning at an organizational level.
- Identify staff with learning leader potential and encourage their development.

Level Three – Practitioner/Journeyperson (Someone who performs proficiently in this competency, and only rarely needs help)

- Exhibit leadership behaviors and actions that impact a learning culture.
- Assist learning leaders in structuring work procedures that integrate learning activities (i.e. after action reviews, huddles, debriefs) in the workplace.
- Facilitate the adoption of practices that promote reflection and opportunities for organizational learning.
- Facilitate practices that support organizational learning in their work environment.
- Serve as a change agent to promote an innovative learning culture.
- Communicate a vision of organizational learning to Facility/VISN leaders.
- Promote strategies that help translate vision into action.

Level Four – Role Model/Coach (Someone who performs very well in this competency and typically seen as someone who can assist and coach others)

- Coach individuals/groups to manage change processes that promote a learning culture.
- Facilitate the usage of group and organizational learning to promote continuous improvement.
- Examine the best practices of other organizations in developing effective and innovative knowledge management solutions.
- Coach/mentor executives and senior leaders in behaviors that reinforce learning and encourage innovation.

Level Five - Expert (A “rare professional” who “wrote the book” on this competency. Provides break-through thinking or performance)

- Contribute to the body of knowledge on affecting culture change at an organizational level.
- Identify innovative opportunities based on organizational learning, where evidence based practices may not yet exist.
- Publish organizational successes and contribute to evidence base for learning culture transformational change.
- Promote systematic sharing of ideas that reinforce organizational learning.



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Definition: Operates from a systems perspective in setting clear learning goals and develops learning and performance strategies aligned with the organization's strategic and operational plans.

Level One – Novice (Someone new or relatively unskilled in this competency)

- Describe the significance of establishing a strategic learning plan.
- Participate in the development of the basic components of a strategic learning plan.
- Identify the DLO's role in communication of the strategic plan.

Level Two – Learner/Apprentice (Someone who knows the basics but needs help to perform in this competency)

- Generate options to achieve a long-range strategic goal or vision for learning.
- Use various communication strategies based on audience needs to disseminate the learning strategy.
- Use evidence based ideas as part of the learning strategic planning process.

Level Three – Practitioner/Journeyperson (Someone who performs proficiently in this competency, and only rarely needs help)

- Collaborate with other leaders to develop learning strategies that support the organization's goals.
- Set clear goals to achieve a long-range strategic vision for learning.
- Develop and communicate a strategic learning plan that promotes organizational change and growth.
- Align the strategic learning plan with organization's goals and strategies.
- Anticipate trends and opportunities that promote strategic learning in the organization.
- Summarize learning strategies that can be communicated to customers and stakeholders.

Level Four – Role Model/Coach (Someone who performs very well in this competency and typically seen as someone who can assist and coach others)

- Integrate and synthesize other viewpoints to build strategic alignment of learning plan with other organizational initiatives.
- Communicate a compelling workforce learning vision to different employee user groups.
- Develop the capability in others to create strategic learning plans using lessons learned and benchmarking.

Level Five - Expert (A "rare professional" who "wrote the book" on this competency. Provides break-through thinking or performance)

- Share organizational learning successes with VA and/or professional associations.
- Facilitate the vision of a learning organization with organizational leaders that will guide and shape workforce learning.
- Present lessons learned from the implementation of the learning strategy in national forums to guide the future of learning in VA.



(3). Foster Supportive Learning Environment

Definition: Promote an environment that provides psychological safety, appreciation of difference, openness to new ideas and supportive learning application strategies.



(4). Concrete Learning Processes & Practices:

Definition: Develop processes and practices that support learning and the collection and dissemination of knowledge sharing in order to integrate learning with work.

3. Foster Supportive Learning Environment

Definition: Promote an environment that provides psychological safety, appreciation of differences, openness to new ideas and supportive learning application strategies.

Level One – Novice (Someone new or relatively unskilled in this competency)

- Identify anticipated enablers or barriers effecting learning environment.
- Solicit ideas from employees to improve learning environment.

Level Two – Learner/Apprentice (Someone who knows the basics but needs help to perform in this competency)

- Suggest actions to enhance the organizational environment to promote effective learning practices.
- Design learning processes based upon supportive learning environment (i.e. components might include: psychological/physical safety, appreciation of differences, and utilizing technology).
- Identify specific components of a positive work environment that contribute to learning.

Level Three – Practitioner/Journeyman (Someone who performs proficiently in this competency, and only rarely needs help)

- Work with stakeholders to incorporate supportive learning environment components in organizational processes.
- Implement strategies to remove barriers that inhibit a positive learning environment.
- Establish guidelines for effective learning practices in support of creating positive learning environments.
- Develop components of a positive work environment that contribute to supportive learning practices.
- Improve the capacity of other learning leaders to promote the enabling of learning (i.e. through education, training, knowledge sharing, mentoring and coaching, etc.).
- Work with leaders and stakeholders to incorporate organizational processes that create and sustain supportive learning environment.

Level Four – Role Model/Coach (Someone who performs very well in this competency and typically seen as someone who can assist and coach others)

- Apply methods to remove barriers that inhibit a positive learning environment across the organization.
- Design and present best practices that promote a safe and supportive learning environment.
- Coach others on the processes that enhance a supportive learning environment.

Level Five - Expert (A “rare professional” who “wrote the book” on this competency. Provides break-through thinking or performance)

- Develop national standards that identify best practice in creating a supportive learning environment.
- Establish national guidelines and/or standardized principles for initiatives that create a supportive learning environment.



(3). Foster Supportive Learning Environment

Definition: Promote an environment that provides psychological safety, appreciation of difference, openness to new ideas and supportive learning application strategies.

(4). Concrete Learning Processes & Practices:

Definition: Develop processes and practices that support learning and the collection and dissemination of knowledge sharing in order to integrate learning with work.



4. Concrete Learning Processes and Practices

Definition: Develop processes and practices that support learning and the collection and dissemination of knowledge sharing in order to integrate learning with work.

Level One – Novice (Someone new or relatively unskilled in this competency)

- Facilitate the concept and value of effective knowledge sharing.
- Identify workplace learning strong practices from the literature that support integrating learning with work.
- Describe how the organizational environment impacts learning in the workplace.
- Describe practices that foster the transfer of knowledge to the workplace.

Level Two – Learner/Apprentice (Someone who knows the basics but needs help to perform in this competency)

- Advocate for standardized methodologies, tools, and templates to make knowledge sharing easier.
- Document stakeholder input on the development of information and knowledge sharing policies and practices for the organization.
- Propose strategies to link environmental characteristics to the application of learning.
- Apply best practices to transfer knowledge within the organization.
- Utilize evidence based research to identify workplace learning strong practices.

Level Three – Practitioner/Journeyman (Someone who performs proficiently in this competency, and only rarely needs help)

- Design systems that promote knowledge sharing and support organizational learning.
- Engage leaders throughout the Facility/VISN to build an infrastructure that supports integrating learning with work practice.
- Facilitate the incorporation of knowledge transfer principles within the organizational environment.
- Develop workplace learning standards and policies that integrate learning with work.
- Link the organization's knowledge sharing vision and strategy to the organization's strategy.
- Continually refine learning processes through the use of learning measurement/feedback and organizational data.

Level Four – Role Model/Coach (Someone who performs very well in this competency and typically seen as someone who can assist and coach others)

- Create and develop the organization's learning infrastructure that supports the integrating learning with work.
- Coach others on methods to integrate the transfer of learning into work practices.
- Collaborate with other organization leaders to develop VA wide knowledge transfer strategies.
- Advise others in designing systems that promote knowledge sharing and organizational learning.

Level Five - Expert (A "rare professional" who "wrote the book" on this competency. Provides break-through thinking or performance)

- Oversee the creation and development of the organization's knowledge sharing infrastructure.
- Oversee the implementation of the learning organization transformation.
- Establish national guidelines for the integration of learning at work.
- Publish and present organizational best practices for knowledge transfer.



5. Fiscal Stewardship

Definition: Manage fiscal resources to support deployment of learning services and plan for needed resources to address future needs.



6. Learning Resources Infrastructure Management

Definition: Ensure the necessary mix of resources (i.e. program, human, capital and technology) are available to support a continuous learning environment for all employees.

5. Fiscal Stewardship

Definition: Manage fiscal resources to support deployment of learning services and plan for needed resources to address future needs.

Level One – Novice (Someone new or relatively unskilled in this competency)

- Identify how the organization's budget process impacts the learning budget.
- Track basic learning services expenditures.
- Create budget requests with minimal guidance.

Level Two – Learner/Apprentice (Someone who knows the basics but needs help to perform in this competency)

- Monitor basic budget expenditures, to include contract budgets, within own area of responsibility.
- Assist with administering expenditure of learning services funds.
- Develop and review learning budget plans.

Level Three – Practitioner/Journeyman (Someone who performs proficiently in this competency, and only rarely needs help)

- Ensure learning resources are planned, budgeted, and monitored, to achieve desired outcomes.
- Manage learning budget and funds to ensure accordance with VA guidelines and policy.
- Oversee deployment of the Facility/VISN learning budget based on established priorities.
- Implement learning services that are fiscally responsible yet provide the appropriate level of service.
- Address fiscal and/or budget concerns with Facility/VISN leaders regarding learning services.

Level Four – Role Model/Coach (Someone who performs very well in this competency and typically seen as someone who can assist and coach others)

- Acquire additional funding from research, HSR&D, or other special funding initiatives.
- Conduct cost/benefit analysis of workforce learning proposals and new programs.
- Coach learning leaders on prioritizing needs, and allocating necessary resources.

Level Five - Expert (A "rare professional" who "wrote the book" on this competency. Provides break-through thinking or performance)

- Using organizational data, forecast future investment strategies in technologies and programs.
- Write policy related to expenditure needs.
- Build a business case for future learning resources
- Establish national guidance on fiscal policy of learning programming.



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Level One – Novice (Someone new or relatively unskilled in this competency)

- Identify available learning space and the impact it will have on learning and performance.
- Identify roles and skill sets of the new learning professional that are different from the traditional educator role.
- Assist in reviewing current staffing levels, resources, and capabilities both within and external to the education department.
- Identify the capabilities of current technologies that foster a positive learning infrastructure.

Level Two – Learner/Apprentice (Someone who knows the basics but needs help to perform in this competency)

- Assess available learning spaces for appropriateness to new learning methods and technologies.
- Collaborate with other learning roles (QI, SRD, HR, etc.) on methods to develop staff capability to promote continuous learning.
- Determine staffing requirements for current and transformational efforts.
- Identify tools and methods that support learning and knowledge sharing and result in an improved learning infrastructure.

Level Three – Practitioner/Journeyman (Someone who performs proficiently in this competency, and only rarely needs help)

- Optimize learning outcomes through the utilization of designated learning space.
- Facilitate integration efforts with internal and external resources to increase capacity and optimize learning within the organization.
- Grow the learning organization through staffing models that incorporate existing and desired competencies of the learning professional.
- Acquire and apply new technologies and skills that support the changing learning culture and promote knowledge sharing.
- Implement learning technologies that enable a more accessible and useful learning infrastructure.
- Collaborate with other learning leaders to develop staff capability to promote continuous learning.

Level Four – Role Model/Coach (Someone who performs very well in this competency and typically seen as someone who can assist and coach others)

- Contribute to capital development plans for updating and building work spaces that contribute to organizational learning.
- Champion staffing requirements and models that support the changing needs of a learning organization.
- Create a resource network between information systems, training, human resources, and the business units in support of the knowledge network internal and external to the facility.
- Coach others on the use of new technologies that enable a more accessible and useful learning infrastructure.

Level Five - Expert (A “rare professional” who “wrote the book” on this competency. Provides break-through thinking or performance)

- Manage and coordinate a complex learning resource center.
- Present lessons learned and contribute to national efforts directed at building models for the new learning professional.
- Contribute to national staffing directives, handbooks, guidelines and other policy statements that describe the new learning professional.
- Establish national guidelines and policy that facilitate implementation and adoption of new technologies that support organizational learning.



7. Learning Consultation:

Definition: Provide learning expertise, advice, guidance and problem-solving to identify and understand learning needs, problems and opportunities.

8. Learning Analysis and Measurement

Definition: Use of data driven processes to analyze learning and performance needs and evaluate results.



7. Learning Consultation

Definition: Provide learning expertise, advice, guidance and problem-solving to identify and understand learning needs, problems and opportunities.

Level One – Novice (Someone new or relatively unskilled in this competency)

- Describe the components of a comprehensive needs assessment and analysis process.
- Use basic consultative questioning techniques to gather learning and performance needs.
- Identify various learning solutions to address basic organizational performance needs.
- Describe strategies for transferring knowledge and skills into the workplace.

Level Two – Learner/Apprentice (Someone who knows the basics but needs help to perform in this competency)

- Identify and assess learning needs that are aligned with the VISN/Facility strategic priorities.
- Identify organizational performance issues failing to achieve desired results.
- Utilize consulting questioning methods to assess for learning needs.
- Offer potential strategies for identifying learning solutions to customer problems/needs.
- Collaborate with stakeholders to implement learning solutions that are integrated in the workplace.
- Identify anticipated enablers or barriers effecting knowledge transfer in the workplace.

Level Three – Practitioner/Journey person (Someone who performs proficiently in this competency, and only rarely needs help)

- Establish strong working relationships to facilitate organizational accountability for learning.
- Partner with stakeholders to implement comprehensive needs assessment process to determine learning and performance needs.
- Analyze performance gaps and recommend potential solutions.
- Identify expected changes in individual and organizational performance as a result of learning and performance solutions.
- Identify environmental barriers and enablers to learning that could influence expected results.
- Implement knowledge/skill transfer strategies in collaboration with key stakeholders.

Level Four – Role Model/Coach (Someone who performs very well in this competency and typically seen as someone who can assist and coach others)

- Coach stakeholders on the components and value of a comprehensive needs assessment and analysis process.
- Develop staff capacity for others to identify and address performance problems.
- Strategize with leaders regarding culture and political realities that impact organizational learning.
- Apply emerging information, learning tools, and technologies to support knowledge transfer of learning to the workplace.

Level Five - Expert (A “rare professional” who “wrote the book” on this competency. Provides break-through thinking or performance)

- Establish direction and goals for large scale workforce learning projects based on learning needs.
- Develop guidance and practice to assist leaders with identifying and addressing performance issues.
- Author policies/procedures reports and management proposals relating to workforce learning solutions.
- Facilitate large meetings at regional or national level to design solutions that promote knowledge transfer to the workplace.



8. Learning Analysis and Measurement

Definition: Use of data driven processes to analyze learning and performance needs and evaluate results.

Level One – Novice (Someone new or relatively unskilled in this competency)

- Describe evaluation methods that can be applied to measure learning.
- Use basic data collection practices (timelines, roles/responsibilities, measurement components and outcomes) for measuring learning.
- Describe data management and analysis tools and techniques.

Level Two – Learner/Apprentice (Someone who knows the basics but needs help to perform in this competency)

- Measure and evaluate the effectiveness of learning solutions to determine learning acquisition.
- Communicate learning project data collection strategies with key stakeholders.
- Prepare and present basic findings of learning and performance improvement programs.

Level Three – Practitioner/Journeyman (Someone who performs proficiently in this competency, and only rarely needs help)

- Establish data collection processes and procedures for measuring and evaluating learning solutions.
- Evaluate learning solutions to assess learning, application on the job, and organizational impact.
- Monitor ongoing data collection and reports to identify trends to improve learning solutions.
- Analyze and use data and results to make recommendations and decisions.
- Ensure evaluation plans are developed for learning solutions to measure effectiveness and results of learning solutions.
- Prepare reports and communicate findings to stakeholders to facilitate decision making and on-going improvement.

Level Four – Role Model/Coach (Someone who performs very well in this competency and typically seen as someone who can assist and coach others)

- Teach measurement and evaluation methods and models to other learning professionals.
- Identify organizational data collection and analysis best practices that can be applied to support a continuous learning culture.
- Use measurement and evaluation data to forecast future investment strategies in technologies and programs and share lessons learned.

Level Five - Expert (A “rare professional” who “wrote the book” on this competency. Provides break-through thinking or performance)

- Serve on national level committees as the resident expert on learning programs data collection.
- Establish organizational standards for application of data collection methods for educational research.
- Present data collection findings and methods at professional conferences or publications.

Key Indicators of Success

Several key success indicators have been identified to use as guideposts of successful application of competencies as they align with the areas of expertise. The actual performance measures associated with these success indicators will be created locally between the DLO and their respective facility or VISN.

