2007

NVQ Level 2 in Team Leading
Unit A1

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Kent Learning Resources

Providing Knowledge and Understanding for Vocational Qualifications

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What is the unit about?

This unit is mainly about making sure you have the personal resources (particularly knowledge, understanding, skills and time) to undertake your work role and reviewing your performance against agreed objectives. It also covers identifying and undertaking activities to develop your knowledge, skills and understanding where gaps have been identified.

Knowledge and understanding

The following is the detail of the knowledge and understanding that you need as defined in the NVQ standards. This workbook will help you with the general knowledge and understanding. Some aspects may also be covered in the workbooks for other units.

General knowledge and understanding

- Why managing your resources (particularly knowledge, understanding, skills and time) is important
- How to identify the requirements of a work-role
- How to set work objectives which are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound)
- How to measure progress against work objectives
- How to identify development needs to address any identified gaps between the requirements of your work-role and your current knowledge, understanding and skills
- What an effective development plan should contain
- The type of development activities which can be undertaken to address identified gaps in knowledge, understanding and skills
- How to identify whether/how development activities have contributed to your performance
- How to get and make effective use of feedback on your performance
- How to update work objectives and development plans in the light of performance, feedback received, any development activities undertaken and any wider changes
- How to record the use of your time and identify possible improvements

You will also need to know and understand the following. You may find it helpful to make some notes on these areas. There is a section at the end of the workbook for your own notes.

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Industry/sector specific knowledge and understanding

- Industry/sector requirements for the development or maintenance of knowledge, understanding and skills

Context specific knowledge and understanding

- The agreed requirements of your work-role including the limits of your responsibilities
- Your agreed personal work objectives
- The reporting lines in your organisation
- Your current knowledge, understanding and skills
- Identified gaps in your current knowledge, understanding and skills
- Your personal development plan
- Your organisation's policy and procedures in terms of personal development
- Available development opportunities and resources in your organisation
- Possible sources of feedback in your organisation

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Developing Yourself

Introduction

To be effective at anything, one of the most important skills you need is that of being able to identify what you need to be able to do and to what standard to discharge your responsibilities. Having identified the different skills you require you then have to take the opportunities to develop yourself, gaining the knowledge and understanding required and the ability to apply these to your work.

The ability to develop yourself is therefore central to becoming effective.

What we are going to do is start to think about how you identify your own training and development needs.

What we are ***NOT*** going to do is produce a definitive list of your needs. You will be able to do that, once you have explored in greater depth the knowledge, skills and understanding you need for the role of team leader.

Identifying the skills you need to develop

To identify the skills you need requires you to undertake a personal assessment. There are many things that you can do to accomplish this. Much of it comes from self reflection and honest self appraisal. We will look at some areas in more detail, but to start with here is a list of some things that you can do. You can identify:

- Your own strengths and skills
- Your own weaknesses and areas where development is needed
- Your own personal goals
- Your own career ambitions
- The opportunities that exist to further your career
- The training and development opportunities that exist
- The gap between the skills you need to do your job and those you already have

You need to take every opportunity to gather information so you can develop a plan for your own development.

For the moment we will use a list of headings that are generally considered to encompass the main areas of a team leader's role.

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Activity 1

In the box, write down some ideas on the things you do as a team leader.

Dealing with People	
Planning work	
Communicating	
Organising work	
Controlling work	
Doing your own 'technical' work	

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You will have identified things relevant to your own situation, but you should have included things that require skills of:

- Listening
- Communicating
- Leadership
- Motivation
- Delegation
- Problem solving
- Allocating work to others
- Setting priorities
- Setting objectives

Activity 2

Now think about each of the things you have listed in terms of:

a. its importance

b. your own level of ability at the moment

Try to be honest about (b). Having thought about it, write down your 'top five' development needs, using the following grid.

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

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So that is one method of identifying your needs – through honestly thinking about the skills you need and being honest with yourself about your current level of ability. Obviously this can be a rather narrow view as it is based solely on your own opinion.

How else can you identify needs?

There are several obvious methods:

- By looking at your *job description* and applying the same process to each of the areas defined;
- From your *appraisals*, either formal or informal, with your line manager;
- From the *objectives* that have been set for you;
- From encouraging people around you to give you '*feedback*' on how well you are doing. Perhaps one of the most important sources of information is the views of those you are leading;
- By constantly reviewing what you are doing and how successful you are at doing it. But especially by thinking about what has not gone as well as expected and working out how to do it better next time. You should also review what went well and working out why it went well – this is often referred to as 'reflective' learning;
- From the results of customer surveys;
- By conducting staff surveys.

From all the different sources of information, you will be able to accurately identify what your development needs are. Knowing about them is not enough. If things are going to get done, you need to write down you own development plan. For this to be useful, you need to write it as a properly constructed 'objective'. We will be looking at this topic in greater depth, but to get started try to complete the grid on the next page for one of the needs you identified. Don't forget that development does not necessarily mean going on a course. You might achieve the result you need by things such as:

- Work shadowing
- Being coached
- Watching a video
- Reading a book
- 'Sitting by Nellie' – receiving one to one instruction

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Activity 3

Complete your plan. The following is a suggested format. You may like to print this page out.

Area for development	What do you need to be able to do at the end of the development?	How can you gain this development?	When will you complete this development?

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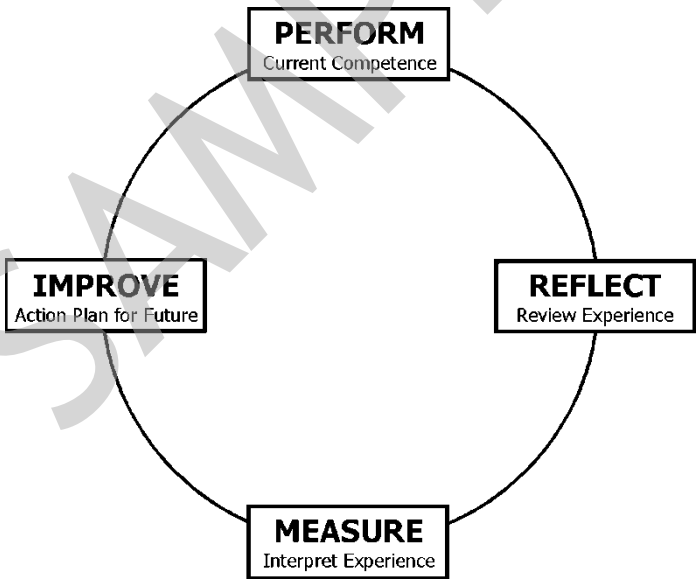
Reflective learning

The whole process of learning is a cycle that includes reflecting on what has happened.

The idea of the learning cycle is based upon a complete learning experience. This should have four separate stages that are linked together. The stages in order of occurrence are:

- Having an experience
- Reviewing what happened
- Drawing conclusions from the experience
- Planning to use the learning in the future

The following diagram represents learning and development as a continuous process. We review our learning experiences in order to develop and then measure our improvement to facilitate effective planning of future learning experiences.



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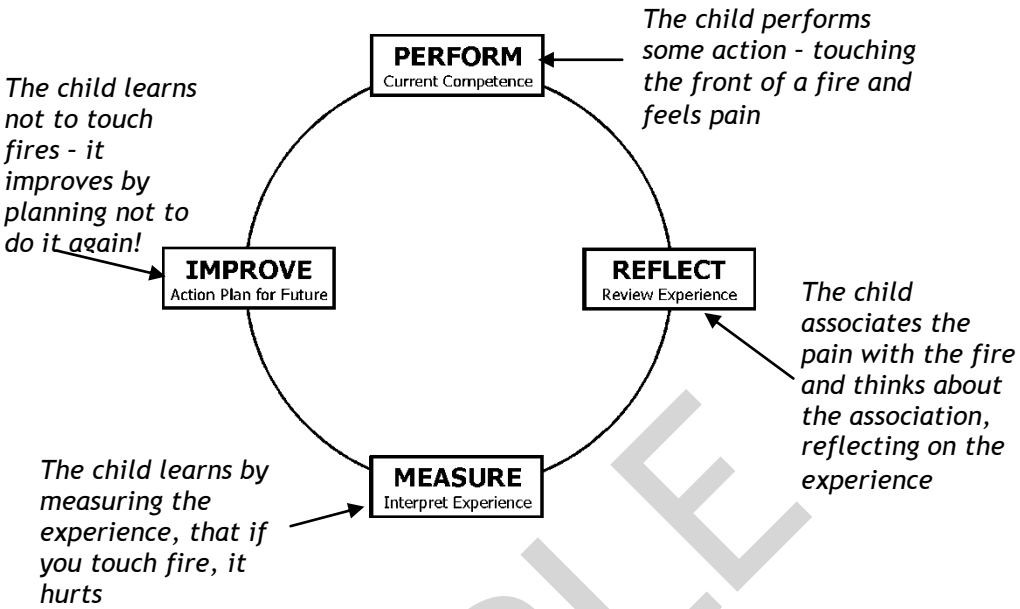
Looking at the way a child learns can provide a simple example of this.



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Activity 4

Now try this for yourself. Take something you have done recently and make a few notes in the boxes. You should spend about 15 minutes on this. Use the grid on the next page

What did you do?	What do you think about the experience?
What have you learnt from the experience?	What will you do in the future?

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Planning for the Future

So far we have thought about developing to meet the needs of the present. But we also need to think about the future.

There are two areas to consider:

- The changing needs of the organisation and, more specifically, your role within it
- Your own future career aspirations

Developing for the Future Needs of the Organisation

There are three main areas to examine to establish whether there is an indication an area where you need to obtain training or development:

Corporate Plans

The organisation should have plans for what it intends to achieve in the future. It will probably have a 'strategic plan' setting out what it is going to do and by when. From this there will probably be departmental plans.

Your line manager should have information about those plans that will affect their area of responsibility. By examining these you should be able to identify what knowledge and skills you will need to be able to perform your role as the plans are put into practice. For example, there may be plans to introduce a new line of product or introduce new procedures for work currently being done.

Working Practices

With the advances in technology and through innovation, new or modified pieces of equipment may be coming. These may need an updating of skills to ensure their effective use

Job Role

As an organisation develops or reorganises, individual job descriptions may change. You need to be aware of what the future requirements for your role are and identify any areas where you will need new skills or, perhaps, an enhanced level of skill. For example, in the past you may not have been involved in conducting appraisals with your staff. May be the plan is to change your role to encompass this responsibility.

The most obvious change of role will be if you are moved to a new task; to do the same task, but in a new area; or if you are, or are going to be, promoted to a higher level of responsibility.

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All these area may be considered during your appraisal with your line manager.

We will try to identify some potential needs by producing a list of potential learning needs.

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