From *Key Learning Skills Supporting Self-Growth: Descriptions, Dimensions, and Scales*

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Writing Performance Criteria

Documenting descriptive expectations of desired quality

Description

Analyze performance to identify performance elements that contribute significantly to the desired outcomes and the quality of those outcomes. With these elements, write explicit descriptions of the desired performance that produces these quality outcomes. Performance criteria become the means to determine if the performer exceeds that set of expectations. These performance criteria are explicit, simple to understand, inspiring, and measurable. They are also orthogonal, multi-dimensional, comprehensive, challenging (but achievable), and target the desired quality. Performance criteria are written for the performer, are normally targeted at a certain context, generate ownership and desire to improve performance quality, and should be adapted as performance needs change.

Dimensions

Analyzing performance	Using the Theory of performance to find important component
Clarifying expectations	Defining a desired standard of quality
Observing details	Knowing what specific actions add significantly to increase quality
Defining characteristics	Determining the key factors that produce quality outcomes
Performer-centered	Communicating from the perspective of the performer
Being descriptive	Choosing words that paint pictures of behaviors/performance
Exemplifying	Use appropriate, relevant situations for the current audience
Making connections	Producing synergy by organizing elements to reveal greater value
Assuring completeness	Addressing all critical dimensions and sources of variability in quality
Stochastic thinking	Seeing randomness and different possibilities over time and context

Scale

1.	Star-Performer	Sets expectations to go beyond published performance criteria to create the most meaningful criteria to create personal self-growth opportunities
2.	Self-starter	Integrates their desires and goals, clarifies expectations and modifies present criteria to own these adjusted criteria
3.	Responsive	Makes personal meaning of established criteria so they meet the explicit performance criteria
4.	Content	Choses a subset of existing criteria where they know they can please others
5.	Static	Uses key phrases drilled into them by others to meet basic requirements

Tips for Improving Writing Performance Criteria

1. Seek out the top characteristics of desired quality, rank them, and place as columns in a table

2. Identify 4 to 6 unique attributes for each characteristic (column) – no reuse

3. For each characteristic, write a performance criterion that represents the desired quality

4. Edit the statement to add more personal meaning that clarifies and provides synergy

5. Present the ordered list of criteria with the most important first

Action Plan Sample

Let go of the words representing the attributes after a quick review and then close your eyes. Visualize a high-quality representation of the actual performance in action. Paint this visual picture in a richly descriptive statement.