

Occupational Competencies

Unit. Employability in Family and Consumer Science

Problem Area. Gaining Employment

Lesson. Occupational Competencies

■ **Student Learning Objectives.** Instruction in this lesson should result in students achieving the following objectives:

- 1 Explain the importance of occupational competencies in gaining employment.**
- 2 Describe the use of task analysis.**
- 3 Describe occupational competency needs in gaining occupational preparation.**

■ **List of Equipment, Tools, Supplies, and Facilities**

- ✓ Writing surface
- ✓ Overhead or PowerPoint projector
- ✓ Visual(s) from accompanying master(s)
- ✓ Copies of sample test, lab sheet(s), and/or other items designed for duplication



■ **Terms.** The following terms are presented in this lesson (shown in bold italics):

- ▶ attitude
- ▶ employability skills
- ▶ general education
- ▶ human relations skills
- ▶ knowledge
- ▶ occupational competencies
- ▶ skill
- ▶ task analysis
- ▶ technical skills

■ **Interest Approach.** Use an interest approach that will prepare the students for the lesson. Teachers often develop approaches for their unique class and student situations. A possible approach is included here.

This approach focuses on having the competencies to perform the duties of family and consumer science occupations. Begin by asking “Why do employers hire employees?” The short answer is “To have workers.” A better answer is “To have people who are capable and can carry out the work that they are to do.” Ask, “Why is it important for an employee to be productive?” Various answers may be given, such as “To keep from getting fired,” “To make more money,” and “To get a good recommendation to move to another job.” The most important reason is to make money for the employer. Without an employee being productive, the employer is not getting return on what the employee is being paid. This may be a difficult point to get across. Ask students to share examples that explain this. To get started, use the example of two chefs (named Sally and Jeff) who work at the same restaurant. Sally prepares 20 dishes each hour; Jeff prepares 15 each hour. “Which chef is most valuable to the employer? Why?” Move from the interest approach into the objectives for the lesson.

SUMMARY OF CONTENT AND TEACHING STRATEGIES

Objective 1: Explain the importance of occupational competencies in gaining employment.

Anticipated Problem: How are occupational competencies important in gaining employment?

- I. **Occupational competencies** are the attributes that enable an individual to perform the duties of an occupation. Competencies in an occupation tend to be similar regardless of where the occupation is carried out.
 - A. Occupational competencies can be divided into three important areas.
 1. Knowledge—**Knowledge** is the information that a person has acquired and can recall to use in performing a family and consumer science occupation or in other ways. It is the ability to read, write, do arithmetic, communicate, use family and consumer science skills, and other abilities. Some individuals might say that knowledge is “stored information.”
 2. Skill—**Skill** is the capacity to perform activities that typically require a high degree of development in manipulative areas in a family and consumer science occupation, perform a mathematical calculation, or use a global positioning system.
 3. Attitude—**Attitude** is how a person mentally feels about something. Attitudes are kept internally but are evident by how we relate to people, go about work, use resources, and view work. Attitudes are demonstrated by smiles, friendliness, honesty, and productivity at work. People are said to have “good attitudes” or “bad attitudes.”
 - B. Individuals need to possess occupational competencies in order to get a job.
 1. An individual who has developed occupational competencies should have the capacity to perform an occupation for an employer.
 2. Having good competencies gives an individual an advantage over a person who has few competencies when looking for a job.
 3. An individual with competencies will require less training to be a productive employee.

Use discussion and presentation approaches to cover this objective. VM–A may be used to outline the content. Role playing might be used in the classroom to illustrate an employer interviewing a person with the needed competencies and another person who has few occupational competencies. The teacher will need to contrive the situation ahead of time and provide the students involved in role playing with information. Here is what is needed: three individuals, an employer

who has a job opening that requires a person with specific occupational competencies, a person with occupational competencies by virtue of education and experience, and a person without occupational competencies and little specific training. Select an occupation found in the local area that has competency requirements, such as a chef, childcare provider, or interior designer. After the role playing, have members of the class critique what they observed and who they would hire.

Objective 2: Describe the use of task analysis.

Anticipated Problem: What is task analysis and how is it used?

- II. **Task analysis** is the process used to identify occupational competencies.
- A. Task analysis involves carefully studying what a person does at work in an occupation.
 - 1. The activities of an individual in an occupation are determined by observing the work performed in the occupation, interviewing people employed in the occupation, interviewing supervisors of people employed in the occupation, and gathering information in other ways. Several sources are needed to produce an accurate task analysis, though observing one individual is quite helpful.
 - 2. The units of work needed in an occupation are listed. The major units are competencies. The units of work that can be clustered with a competency are subcompetencies. A competency may have two or more subcompetencies that make up the overall competency. Subcompetencies are sometimes known as tasks.
 - 3. Have one or more individuals who are employed in the occupation, are personnel directors, or are otherwise qualified to do so, review the list of competencies and subcompetencies and suggest improvements.
 - B. People trained in vocational education development often study occupations to identify competencies. Students can do their own competency studies by observing a person at work in an occupation and making a list of what the individual does.
 - C. Task analysis provides information that is useful in gaining the education and training needed to enter an occupation.
 - 1. Individuals use task analysis to help acquire the skills they need.
 - 2. Educators use task analysis to develop curriculum to prepare people to work in occupations.
 - 3. Employers can use task analysis to design training for new employees.

Use discussion and presentation methods to achieve this objective. Task analysis is a fairly in-depth process that should be treated here in simple terms. Use VM-B to outline the content of the objective. Have students practice performing a task analysis on a family and consumer science occupation that is

of interest to them. To get students started in using task analysis, use the example occupation of “family and consumer science teacher.” Form students into cooperative learning groups and have each group prepare a task analysis. Each group should provide an oral report to the class.

Objective 3: Describe occupational competency needs in gaining occupational preparation.

Anticipated Problem: What occupational competencies are needed to prepare for an occupation?

- III. The competencies needed to prepare for an occupation vary from one occupation to another. Occupations that are similar may have similar competencies.
 - A. The competencies needed for an occupation may be grouped into four areas: technical skills, general education, human relations skills, and employability skills.
 1. **Technical skills** are the skills specific to the particular occupation. Technical skills are those identified through task analysis generally associated with the occupation being studied. For example, a chef needs skills that people in other occupations would not need.
 2. **General education** is the preparation an individual needs that is not specific to a particular occupation. General education includes the ability to read, write, do arithmetic, and communicate. For example, a chef needs to be able to read, write, do arithmetic, and communicate.
 3. **Human relations skills** are the abilities to get along with other people. They include common courtesies that help people work and live together happily. For example, a chef works with other people and must know how to relate to them.
 4. **Employability skills** are the abilities to get and keep a job. They relate to being productive on the job. For example, a chef must be at work on time, stay on task, and follow the employer’s procedures.

Use class presentation and discussion approaches to cover the content of this objective. Use VM–C to outline the information about the four areas of competencies. Invite a floral designer to the class to explain how each of the four competencies relate to his or her profession.

- **Review/Summary.** Use the student learning objectives as the basis for review and summary. Have students explain the content associated with each objective. Use their responses in determining which objectives and concepts need to be retaught. The anticipated problems can be used as student review questions. Have a local personnel director, school counselor, vocational counselor, or other individual who is qualified discuss occupational competencies or task analysis. If not previously done as a part of this lesson, have students perform a simple task analysis for a family and consumer science occupation that interests them. Private counseling may be appropriate with students to help them identify the occupational preparation they need based on their tentative career goals.
- **Application.** Use the included visual masters and those activities recommended in the teaching strategies to apply the information presented in the lesson. Students can apply the lesson as they plan their supervised experience or pursue part-time or full-time jobs in family and consumer science. The information can also be applied as students choose courses in high school that develop occupational competencies.
- **Evaluation.** Evaluation should be based on student comprehension of the learning objectives. This can occur during instruction, review, or later as students apply the information. The sample written test provided can also be used.

■ **Answers to Sample Test:**

Part One: Matching

1. d
2. a
3. b
4. c
5. e

Part Two: Short Answer

1. Occupational competencies are the attributes (or qualities) that enable an individual to perform an occupation. They are important because they indicate the kind of preparation an individual needs to enter an occupation.
2. The answer should include the general steps in task analysis: identify the activities of individuals in an occupation, list the activities (units of work), cluster the activities to form competencies and subcompetencies, and have the list reviewed by people in the occupation, personnel directors, and other qualified individuals.
3. The four areas of occupational competencies are technical skills (skills specific to the occupation), general education (education not specific to any occupation, such as reading, writing, doing arithmetic, and communicating), human relations skills (abilities to get along with other people), and employability skills (abilities needed to get, keep, and advance in a job).

Occupational Competencies

► Part One: Matching

Instructions: Match the term with the correct definition.

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------------|
| a. knowledge | d. technical skills |
| b. skill | e. employability skills |
| c. task analysis | |

- ____ 1. Skills specific to an occupation that require training to develop.
- ____ 2. Information that a person has acquired and can recall to use in performing a family and consumer science occupation.
- ____ 3. Ability to perform activities that require a high degree of training and/or experience.
- ____ 4. The process used to identify occupational competencies.
- ____ 5. Abilities that help a person get, keep, and be successful in a job.

► Part Two: Short Answer

Instructions: Answer the following questions.

1. What are occupational competencies? Why are they important?



2. How is a task analysis performed for an occupation?

3. List and briefly explain the four areas of occupational competencies.

Identifying Occupational Competencies

Overview

Students will use a broad range of reading material in order to research occupational competencies and understand what is necessary to be competitive in a job interview.

- ◆ *Completing the worksheet:* Students will complete a worksheet regarding occupational competencies.
- ◆ *Writing the paper:* Students will write a one-page paper regarding occupational competencies.

Procedures

Prior Student Learning Opportunities

1. In order to comprehend a broad range of reading materials, students should experience sufficient learning opportunities to develop the following skills:
 - ◆ Use information from text to form, explain, and support questions and predictions.
 - ◆ Generate and respond to questions that reflect higher-level thinking skills.
 - ◆ Ask open-ended questions to improve critical thinking skills.
 - ◆ Summarize and make generalizations from content and relate them to the purpose of the material.
 - ◆ Interpret concepts or make connections through analysis, evaluation, inference, and/or comparison.
 - ◆ Connect, relate, interpret, and integrate information from various sources and genres.
 - ◆ Draw conclusions based on information found in visual information and data.

Student Task

2. Provide each student with a copy of the task sheet. Have students review and discuss the task to be completed.
3. Students will conduct research on occupational competencies using a broad range of reading material. Two students will then be randomly selected to participate in the role-playing activity (these students will be given their parts ahead of time). The role-playing activity is an interview for a job. One student will be asked to act as though he or she has occupational competencies by virtue of education and experience, and a person without

occupational competencies and little experience will be played by the other student. The teacher will be interviewing the two students for the same position.

4. The students who are not participating in the role-playing activity will serve as observers. They will be observing the two students interviewing for the position and will fill out the student task sheet during the interview. The observing students will decide what they liked and disliked about each candidate and will conclude with their decision on who they would hire, student one or student two.
5. Students will then use the information gained from research and the mock interview to write a one-page paper on occupational competencies and what is necessary to be competitive in a job interview.

Evaluation

6. Evaluate each student's performance using the rubric. Add each student's scores to determine the performance level.

Time Requirements

- ◆ Students will be given one day in class to research occupational competencies. The mock job interview will last one 45-minute class period. Students will then have one class period in the computer lab to type up the one-page paper.

Resources

- ◆ Computer Lab
- ◆ Texts on Employment
- ◆ Texts on Occupational Competencies
- ◆ Identifying Occupational Competencies student task sheet
- ◆ Understanding Occupational Competencies scoring rubric

Identifying Occupational Competencies

Directions: Observe the two candidates interview for a job and use the research that you conducted in class on occupational competencies in order to help you answer the questions. After completion of this worksheet, type a one-page paper on occupational competencies and what is necessary to be successful in a job interview.

1. Is candidate #1 knowledgeable about items related to the job?
2. What specific skill(s) does candidate #1 possess that would be beneficial for the job?
3. Does candidate #1 have a positive attitude?
4. What type of educational background or experience does candidate #1 have?
5. Would you hire #1 for the job and why?
6. Is candidate #2 knowledgeable about items related to the job?
7. What specific skill(s) does candidate #2 possess that would be beneficial for the job?
8. Does candidate #2 have a positive attitude?
9. What type of educational background or experience does candidate #2 have?
10. Would you hire #2 for the job and why?



Understanding Occupational Competencies

- ◆ Exceeds standard (7–8 total points)
- ◆ Meets standard (5–6 total points)
- ◆ Approaches standard (3–4 total points)
- ◆ Begins standard or absent (2 total points)

	Questions	One-Page Paper on Occupational Competencies
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All 10 questions have been answered. Answers consistently predict text content. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content contains all significant main points from the text. Details consistently support the main points.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All 10 questions have been answered. Answers usually predict text content. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content contains most significant main points from the text. Details consistently support the main points.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Six to nine questions have been answered. Answers sometimes predict text content. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content contains some significant main points from the text. Details sometimes support the main points.
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Five or fewer questions have been answered. Answers seldom or never predict text content. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content contains few or no significant main points from the text. Details seldom or never support the main points.
Score		

OCCUPATIONAL COMPETENCIES

- ◆ **Occupational competencies**—attributes that enable an individual to perform the duties of an occupation
- ◆ Three areas of occupational competencies:
 - Knowledge
 - Skill
 - Attitude



TASK ANALYSIS

◆ **Task analysis**—the process used to identify occupational competencies

◆ Steps:

1. Observe, interview, and read about the units of work performed in an occupation.
 - Units of work are tasks or job duties.
 - The units identified should be common in an occupation regardless of where it is carried out.
2. List the units of work.
3. Cluster similar units of work, with lesser units under larger units.
4. Have a qualified person review the list.



