

An Introduction to DACUM

What is DACUM?

DACUM or “Developing A Curriculum” is an innovative occupational analysis technique that uses a committee of expert workers in a group process to define their job. DACUM is based on three premises:

- 1) Expert workers are in a better position to describe their job/occupation than anyone else. A carefully chosen group of 8-12 expert workers from the occupational area under consideration form the DACUM committee. Committee members are recruited directly from business, industry, or the professions. Modified small-group brainstorming techniques are used to obtain the collective expertise and consensus of the committee.

DACUM has been successfully used to analyze occupations at the professional, technical, skilled, and semi-skilled levels. Some examples of analysis include:

- Custodian
- Early Childhood Education Directors
- Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)
- Equal Employment Opportunity Manager
- Executive Secretary
- Food Service Manager
- Horticulture Technician
- Law Enforcement Officer
- Licensed Practical Nurse
- Pharmacy Technician
- State-Level Vocational Education Specialist
- Travel Consultant

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- 2) Any job/occupation can be effectively described in terms of the tasks that successful workers in that job/occupation perform. The analysis typically results in the identification of 6 to 12 duties involving 50 to 150 tasks that define what a successful worker in a particular job or cluster of related jobs must be able to do. The end product of a DACUM analysis is a complete competency profile, the validity of which is comparable to that of any other analysis method.
 - 3) All tasks, in order to be performed correctly, require certain knowledge, skill, and attitudes. Whereas the primary focus of DACUM is on the performance aspects of a job, these lists represent four other aspects of job analysis; they represent different ways of looking at the requirements of the job. Because they are distinct (though related), it is very important to keep them separate if a high quality analysis of job performance requirements is to be obtained.

Note: The items contained in these four lists may be regarded as means to the end-the end being performance. The DACUM process is efficient because the committee works intensively to achieve consensus, usually completing the analysis in two days.

DACUM Information Sheet

What is DACUM (Developing a Curriculum)?

DACUM is a relatively new and innovative approach to occupational analysis. It has proven to be a very effective method of quickly determining, at relatively low cost, the competencies or tasks that must be performed by persons employed in a given job or occupational area.

The profile chart that results from the **DACUM** analysis is a detailed and graphic portrayal of the skills or competencies involved in the occupation being studied. The **DACUM** analysis can be used as a basis for (1) curriculum development, (2) training needs assessments, (3) student achievement records, (4) worker performance evaluations, (5) competency test development, and (6) job descriptions.

DACUM has been successfully used to analyze occupations at the professional, technical, skilled, and semiskilled levels. **DACUM** operates on the following three premises: (1) expert workers can describe and define their job more accurately than anyone else, (2) an effective way to describe a job is to define the tasks that expert workers perform, and (3) all tasks, in order to be performed correctly, demand certain knowledge, skills, tools, and attitudes.

A carefully chosen group of about 8-10 experts from the occupational area forms the **DACUM** committee. Committee members are recruited directly from business, industry, or the professions. The committee works under the guidance of a facilitator for two days to develop the **DACUM** chart. Modified small-group brainstorming techniques are used to obtain the collective expertise and consensus of the committee.

The **DACUM** committee is carefully guided through each of the following steps by the facilitator:

1. Orientation
2. Review of job or occupational area description
3. Identification of general areas of job responsibility
4. Identification of specific tasks performed in each of the general areas of responsibility
5. Review and refinement of task statements
6. Sequencing of task statements
7. Identification of general knowledge and skill requirements of the occupation, tools, equipment, supplies, materials used, desirable worker traits, and attitudes.
8. Other options, as desired (i.e., identification of entry level tasks)

Because of their current occupational expertise, committee participants do not need to make any advance preparations. Participants on past **DACUM** committees, without exception have found the activity to be a professionally stimulating and rewarding experience.