**Documenting Needs Assessments on the ONA CNE**

**Faculty-Directed or Independent Study Documentation Forms**

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The first requirement under the heading of "assessment of learner needs" is identification of the target audience, section A. Check the appropriate response box, or describe the target audience if the response is "other".

The next section (B) asks for methods to identify the need for this activity - *for this target audience*. For example, you may check the box indicating "trends in literature, law, and health care" because you are want to teach a class about changes occurring as a result of the IOM report on *The Future of Nursing*. However, just because you're excited about the report doesn't necessarily mean that your learners are. If they have an interest in the topic, what should be the focus - expanding scope of practice? working more effectively with colleagues from other disciplines? advancing education for registered nurses? something else? These questions will stimulate you to think about your responses to the next three sections. Note that there is a requirement that you have evidence in the activity file to support your needs assessment data. That does not mean that you have to have the *Future of Nursing* book itself, but you need to have bibliography or website information to support the general need as well as evidence to support how this general information applies to your particular target audience.

Sections C, D, and E apply regardless of the type of needs assessment data you have, so each of those sections must be completed. They build on each other - first you identify your target audience, then you provide evidence of what needs assessment data is relevant for this target audience. Given the target audience and the needs assessment data, you then document *how* that evidence supports your decision to plan this particular learning activity for these learners (item C). The next item (D) helps you think about the gap that exists between current level of learner knowledge, skill, or practice and the desired level. Item E provides the foundation for the outcome of the activity - given the gap identified with this target audience, what outcome will tell you that the gap has been filled?

For example, you know that there is currently a 12% rate of facility-acquired infection in your surgical patients and have identified that surgical nurses (target audience) are not familiar with current guidelines from the Association for Professionals in Infection Control (APIC) in the care they provide (needs assessment). The evidence from your needs assessment shows that of 55 RNs, only 3 were able to cite the current APIC guidelines as their model for practice. The gap (item D) is twofold - a gap in knowledge (familiarity with the current guidelines) and a gap in practice (inability to follow those guidelines to prevent infection in the surgical patients). Based on this data, the outcome you want the learner to achieve (item E) is the ability to apply current APIC guidelines in their care of surgical patients. You will then develop your learning activity to include both didactic (knowledge) and skills (practice) components in order for learners to be able to achieve the desired outcome. Thinking down the road to how your provider unit enhances the ability of nurses to provide quality care, you could then look at the rate of infection among surgical patients 3-6 months from now and see if that number has decreased (the measurable outcome).

You might document these items as:

Describe the evidence from the needs assessment that led you to plan the activity:

55 surgical nurses were surveyed, and only 3 were able to identify the current APIC guidelines as the model for practice. There is currently a 12% rate of facility-acquired infections in the population cared for by these patients, significantly higher than acceptable by our risk management team.

Describe the gap identified through your needs assessment that indicates where learners are now compared to where they need to /should be in relation to the knowledge or skill being addressed in the learning activity:

Gap in knowledge - target audience unfamiliar with APIC guidelines

Gap in practice - unable to apply guidelines to reduce rate of infection

Based on the needs assessment evidence and gap analysis described above, state what outcome you wish the learner to achieve:

Implementation of APIC guidelines in practice by the surgical nurses, resulting in a minimum 50% decrease in the number of facility-acquired infections within three months of the educational activity.

For additional information, please contact Zandra Ohri, Director of Continuing Education and Nurse Peer Review Leader at ONA. (614-448-1027, zohri@ohnurses.org)