

# Concept Paper

On

## Supporting Competency –Based Learning (CBL)

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Competency models are critical for leveraging important HR functions for business success. Competency-based learning (CBL) is a very powerful foundation for the construction of e-learning solutions. CBL targets crucial skills and practices that directly contribute to an organization's goals and business drivers. In today's knowledge economy, successful businesses must apply the same rigor to managing human capital assets as they apply to managing other kinds of capital. CBL recognizes human capital in the form of competency models and then builds training programs, individuals development plans, performance management and measurement systems upon these competency models.

Competency-based learning models are exploited by e-learning because they enable organizations to deliver content or learning objects to individuals.

AS&K provides the high level strategic consulting to design and develop the CBL corporate plan. Our approach drives the overall business strategic goals down through the organization, to individuals, while simultaneously linking the competencies, skills and abilities that are required to execute those goals effectively.

AS&K can support any and all of the implementation phases our Competency-based learning model (see Illustration 1 on the next page).

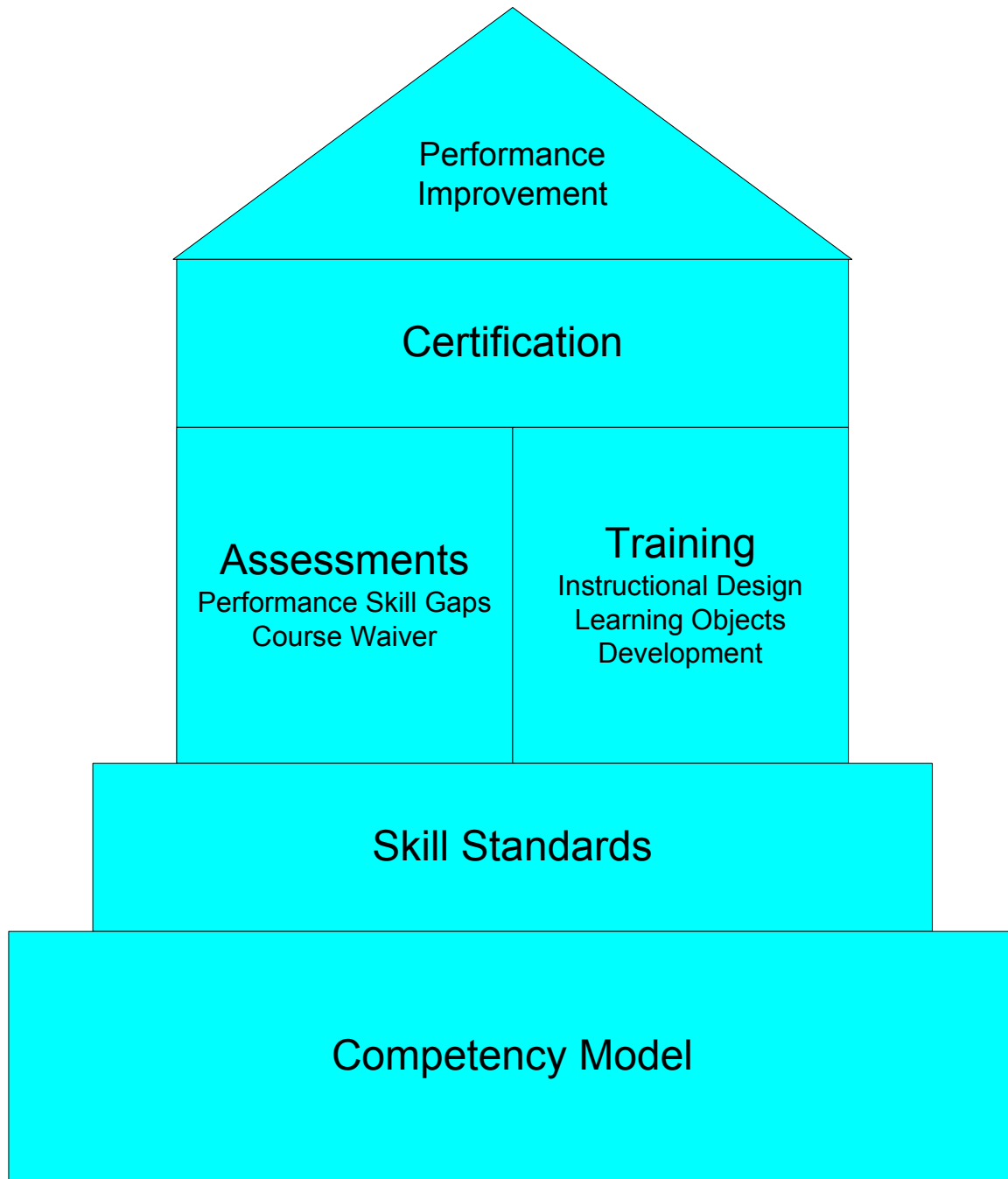
➤ **Competency Model development**

Competency models are at the core of many key human resources functions, including CBL. They provide a tool for determining exactly what skills are required to meet the different needs of today and probable needs of the future (Lucia & Lepsinger, 1999). They are the key to the individual as well as the organization utilizing these skills (see Illustration 2). AS&K can develop the Competency Models to be used in this process.

➤ **Establish Skill Standards**

Once the skills and knowledge that form a competency model have been developed, the amount of the skill or knowledge required to succeed must be determined. Management and subject matter experts set these levels or standards and these become the target level of performance for all individuals.

### Illustration 1: AS&K's Competency Based Learning Model



## ➤ **Assessment**

CBL links competency assessments with an articulated competency model of a highly competent performer. AS&K develops and validates competency assessments that measure the learning objectives of a training program to ensure that the trainees have mastered the content of the training. Mastery tests can be used to “certify” that employees have achieved the required level of competence.

- **Identify Performance Gaps**

A skill gap survey is based upon a competency model. It is a simple method to gather information about the competency model skills and knowledge that exist in an organization. The skill gap survey is developed by turning the competency model into a survey with rating scales for each of the competencies. Ratings are gathered from the supervisor and others and the results are used to identify skill gaps. The individual results can be “rolled up” to identify organizational gaps, recruiting and curriculum needs.

- **Determine Course Waiver**

Competency assessments are used not only to identify competent performers but may serve as pre-training assessments that identify those who do not require training. Because the competency assessments and learning objectives are based upon the competency models, success on the competency assessment ensure that the test taker has mastered the training content and therefore does not need to attend the training. Waiver tests can save significant amounts of time and money.

## ➤ **Training**

- **Instructional Design**

Competency models inform instructional design. The competency model, properly constructed, contains a complete list of the skills and knowledge needed to perform successfully on the job. The competency model serves as a blueprint for the instructional designer. The instructional designer uses the competency model to create the learning objectives and guide the development of the training content.

- **Developing learning objects**

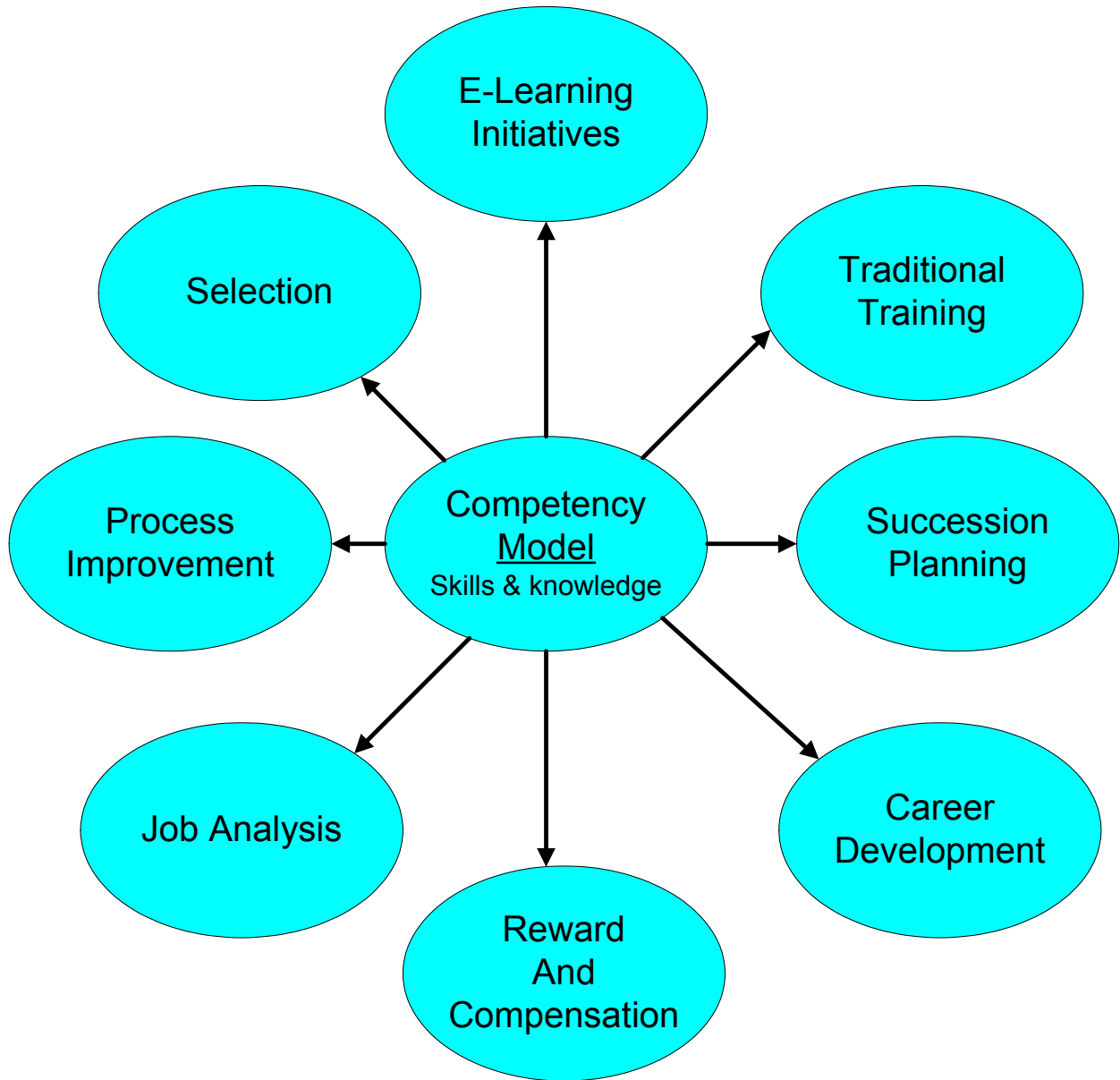
The competency model also serves as a blueprint to identify learning objects that can form the building blocks for e-learning.

## ➤ **Certification**

AS&K develops competency models, assessments and e-learning to provide organizations with certification programs. A properly developed and validated certification program ensures individuals have mastered the critical skills and knowledge identified in the competency model and required for business success.

AS&K views competency-based learning as one component in a powerful strategy for leveraging competency models and maximizing the impact of assessments, training and performance support programs and resources.

**Illustration 2: AS&K's Skills at the Core Model**



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