Instructional Unit Module 1
Lesson Topic: "Bottom Line Up Front" Report Writing
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Introduction

Young engineers entering the profession often struggle with technical writing – specifically, report writing and presentations. Their writing is logical, sequential, and narrative. They tend to include too much detail and take too long getting to the point, wishing to showcase their efforts in completing the process discussed in the report. Their managers, however, prefer reports that are clear, concise, and summative, ideally embedding visuals such as graphs to condense information. For example, a polished report might include a brief introduction of the problem statement and result, followed by the summarized process, integrating visuals to display relevant data.

Assuming managers do not wish to dedicate the time and resources to have their new employees undergo an entire course on technical writing, this brief lesson on "Bottom Line Up Front" report writing will provide a solid start on addressing the observed performance gap.

The remainder of this lesson proposal includes considerations regarding the instructional setting and target learners for the lesson, as well as the instructional goal and performance goals to be assessed.

Instructional Setting

- Location: Junior engineers' office workstations or home offices.
- Resources: Learners should complete the fully online, asynchronous lesson on their work computers with access to the LMS.
- Time Factors: Learners should be allotted 30 minutes of work time to complete the lesson. Employers may want to consider additional time and related lessons or sequenced course modules to further develop technical writing skills.
- Other Significant Factors: The precipitating cause of the training may affect employees' attitude towards the topic. Training could be assigned to all junior engineers in their first year of employment, or could be assigned by managers when they observe the need for individuals to improve their report writing.

- Learning Context: Fully online. Junior engineers complete the training on their work computers at their individual workstations or home offices.
- Performance Context: Employees will use newly acquired skills when writing reports on work computers.

Target Learners

- Background: Mostly aged in mid-20s. Recent college graduates who have been onboarded as junior engineers. All passed high school English classes and have varying experiences of college level writing (often minimal.) All are at least adequate writers, except those struggling to write in English due to a language barrier. Some may be excellent writers. Unless all new employees are assigned this lesson, selected learners should be those who show a deficiency in report writing. Diversity in race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and socioeconomic status will be inconsequential for this lesson, as the text passages used to practice the BLUF writing strategy will draw from hypothetical engineering scenarios in a professional setting.
- Current roles: Recently onboarded engineers, young professionals.
- Level of comfort and familiarity with using digital tools or learning technologies: Highly proficient digital natives who have earned STEM degrees.
- Self-paced or collaborative learning environments: Young professionals should be flexible to work effectively in both environments. Self-paced, asynchronous learning is recommended for this lesson.
- Typical engagement with learning tasks: Engineers are critical thinkers and problem solvers; they likely respect structure and guidance but thrive with open-ended exploration.
- Types of support needed to succeed in the IU: They may need motivational support from managers; that is, if their writing has previously been considered acceptable in academic settings, they'll need to understand why they are not performing as expected in the workplace. This IU will provide the needed instructional support, except in the event that an English language learner might benefit from a translation option. Technical support will not likely be needed.
- General academic and digital literacy skills: Highly proficient. All learners graduated in a STEM field and were selected for what may have been competitive positions.
- Considerations for disability accommodations and accessibility: Employees with disabilities should already have accessible work computers and workstations or home offices. The LMS used as a vehicle for the lesson should be checked for accessibility.

Instructional Goal

Learners will implement the writing strategy known as "Bottom Line Up Front," or BLUF, thereby shifting their approach to report writing from an inductive to a deductive presentation of information.

Performance Goals

Learners will:
- Identify key background facts about the concept of BLUF.
- Choose BLUF-aligned openings for various report samples.
- Write an original BLUF opening for a sample report.
- Select the best outlines for sample report scenarios, indicating the options that model BLUF openings followed by clear and summative content.

Feedback from Explanation of Goals to Selected Target Audience Member

EDTC 6321 classmate Sharadkumar Karangiya provided feedback for my project, as follows:

> I believe that the Bottom Line Up Front (BLUF) approach is essential for technical and professional writing. The objectives allow learners to apply BLUF in sophisticated ways to create technical reports professionally. Personally, I am confident that this IU will assist me in synthesizing reports in a clear and concise manner. By incorporating this skill, I would be able to share reports with key messages highlighted at the beginning without further revision.

He also referred me to APA guidelines, but I let him know that you had requested that we skip the cover page and choose single spacing to allow for a quicker read and conservation of paper if the proposal is printed.

Summary

My IU 1 identifies a performance gap in respect to young engineers who lack the writing skills to produce the clear, concise, summative reports desired by managers. A solid

first step to addressing this performance gap would be to have employees complete the proposed lesson on "Bottom Line Up Front" report writing. Implementing this writing strategy will lead employees to shift their approach to report writing from an inductive to deductive presentation of information.

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