The 70:20:10 Methodology
Jos Arets
Competency models and competency management play an important role in the world of Learning and Development. This is often based on the idea that there is a positive relationship between competencies and organizational results. In this article we will first focus on the value and limitations of a competency model for L&D. These models are intended to describe the 'what' of work, which is valuable but also insufficient. The 'how' of Learning and Development is also important, and is described in a methodology. Next we will focus on the methods used in work and then we will focus on the 70:20:10 methodology.

**Why Competency Models For L&D?**

**Competency Models For Learning And Development In Organisations**

Many organizations make widespread use of competencies. Managers, Learning and Development professionals, and other employees use competency management, dictionaries, measurement and assessment, and competency-based development. Many organizations base their HR policy, and often also their HR development, assessment and throughput cycles, on competencies.

The success of this approach is based on the assumption that there is a clear connection between personal competencies, managed individual development, and the organization’s performance. However, this connection now appears to be tenuous or nonexistent. Caldwell (2008) examines the application of competency models by business ners, and concludes: ‘The survey and interview evidence reviewed indicates that competency models for business partners are not as effective as generally assumed, and they are particularly weak in predicting performance in business partnering roles.’

**Questions About Competency Models**

Kamperman (2009), Stevens (2012), and Stone et al. (2013) also question the use of competency models in organizations, not least because different authors define competency in different ways (Kamperman, 2009). Measuring competency is ambiguous and problematic (Kamperman, 2009; Stone, 2013). Also, competency models and dictionaries are always managed by HR rather than management (Brockbank, Ulrich, 2013). The side effect of this is that people have to work out for themselves how to apply the competency dictionary to their own jobs – and not everyone is able to do this (Caldwell, 2008).

**Example**

Take the competency of organizational sensitivity. In preparation for my annual review, I looked in the competency dictionary. This states that organizational sensitivity means ‘the ability to assess the consequences of the tasks you carry out, and the decisions you take, on your colleagues, your department, and other parts of the organization.’ To be honest, I don’t have a clear idea of how this specifically translates to my work. I don’t understand the explanation of this abstract concept. This is what it says:
• ‘Recognizes clients’ and colleagues’ implicit expectations.
• Is able to adapt to the organizational culture.
• Anticipates formal and informal communication within the organization.
• Shows empathy in communication with clients, colleagues and others’.

I don’t have a clear idea of how to implement this in terms of how I do my job. I’m supposed to rate myself, and ask colleagues to do it as well, in preparation for my annual review. Fortunately, I’m not the only one...

Despite their shortcomings, competency models do have a function in individual professional development, and in defining the knowledge required to do the job (Campion, 2011; Stevens, 2012).

This also applies to L&D.

**Competency Models For Learning And Development**

Competency models describe the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to do a job. They also apply to L&D, as the following two examples show.

**The ATD Model**

The best-known example is the ATD competency model (ATD, 2014), consisting of generic competencies, and the following job-specific ones:

• Managing learning programs.
• Integrated talent management.
• Coaching.
• Knowledge management.
• Change management.
• Performance improvement.
• Instructional design.
• Training sessions.
• Learning technology.
• Learning impact evaluation.

Each section specifies what to do, but not how to do it. In the case of performance improvement, this includes identifying the client, carrying out performance, cause and system analysis, collecting data, and other tasks.

**The Skills Journey**

Shepherd (2017) introduces a skills-based development model for L&D professionals, and explains that a skill has physical, social and cognitive dimensions. There is a great deal of confusion between skills and competencies because their definitions overlap (Kamperman, 2009).
Shepherd’s model consists of three domains, each defining four roles. The skills to be developed for each role are as follows:

- Interaction with stakeholders as architect, analyst, manager, and evaluator.
- Interaction with learners as instructor, facilitator, coach, and expert.
- Interaction with media as curator, producer, designer, and journalist.

Shepherd also defines each role in operational terms. For example, the content curator ‘draws upon the wealth of information and people that could be valuable to their learners, and suggests where they should start’ (Shepherd, 2017).

**Development-Oriented Competency Models**

The ATD competency model and the skills journey are two examples of development-oriented models that describe the what. What do you need to know and do in order to work as an L&D professional? This creates a common language and a shared body of knowledge for the profession, as well as legitimizing professional action.

Providing we take account of the drawbacks mentioned in the previous section, an L&D competency model serves a valuable function, and in terms of the practicality of working, a generic model is not enough. At the very least, it must answer the ‘how’ question. How does it work in practice, and how should I do things like content curation and cause and performance analysis? If we are to provide a professional answer to this question, we must use a methodology developed for Learning and Development.

**Working Methodically With 70:20:10**

Many occupations use methodologies specifying how they work, their resources they use, the expertise they need, and so on. Examples include doctors, lawyers, engineers, nurses, ICT specialists, and organizational development professionals. The Learning and Development profession can also benefit from such methodologies. A methodology is a standardized, carefully considered way of acting to achieve a specific result with assistance. Working methodically is to do so in a systematic, goal-oriented, process- and development-based way, and may include various methods:

- **Goal-Oriented**

The overall goal determines the methodology. For many Learning and Development departments, the goal is to demonstrate the value of learning. Others are seeking primarily to demonstrate business impact, in which case they will use a different methodology. Of course, the goal must be broken down into subgoals that can feasibly be achieved within set deadlines. It is important not to lose sight of the ultimate goal, or to confuse goals and subgoals or ends and means.
• **Systematic**
  Working systematically means planning in advance and progressing in a predetermined sequence of steps, rather than in random order.

**Standards-Based**
Standards are the guidelines that L&D professionals follow, using preset benchmarks to achieve the desired result. They are constantly developed on the basis of practical and theoretical research and professional experience.

• **Process-Based**
  A methodology follows a specific sequence and direction, depending on the goal and the systematic approach. It can be expressed as a number of phases.

• **Method-Based**
  A methodology comprises a series of methods that differ for each phase of the methodological process. L&D professionals use a variety of methods, such as formulating smart learning goals and combining different didactic techniques to form a method. A method can also exist in its own right rather than being part of a methodology.

One common misunderstanding about the methodological approach is that it reduces the L&D professional’s autonomy because it requires agreement on phasing, critical tasks, and standards, giving them limited options to act on their own insights. If we are being honest, this is true. For example an airline pilot has to fly to a specific destination, and a surgeon carrying out a standard operation must comply with certain guidelines. The advantage of a methodology is that it guides us to the desired result, and ideally is evidence based. It is a ready-made professional framework that saves time and energy.

Clearly, methodologies must not be followed blindly, but they have the following advantages in Learning and Development:

• **Tailor Made Service**
  Following a targeted and systematic methodology enables L&D professionals to tailor solutions to the context in which they are working.

• **Continuity And Quality Of Service**
  A methodology protects the Learning and Development professional and their clients against unnecessary errors and duplication. It reduces the amount of variation, which improves quality, and ensures continuity of service by providing guidance for the rest of the L&D team.

• **Scientific Research**
  Using a fixed methodology makes it possible to research the effectiveness of data collection solutions design and implementation, approaches to change, evaluation, and other variables. Scientific research enables the Learning and Development profession to be critically monitored, assessed on its merits, and developed in the long term.

• **Development Of The Profession**
  All professions change constantly, to improve and keep pace with the times. Methodologies are not set in stone, and continue to be developed as a result of new theories, practical experience, and the interaction between the two. They make it possible continuously to monitor the effectiveness of standardized ways of working, and contribute to the sustainable development of the L&D profession’s body of knowledge.
Examples Of Learning And Development Methodologies

There are clearly many different types of methodology. These include the various instructional design models based on the work of Robert Gagné and numerous others. One less scientific but well known ISD model is ADDIE, which stands for Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation.

One recent variant is Learning Experience Design (Gutiérrez, 2017). This is the process of creating learning experiences that enable the learner to achieve the desired result in a people- and goal-oriented manner (Global LX Community, 2017).

The aim of the ISD models is to develop learning solutions, so the methodology emphasizes collecting data and using resources to design and implement formal and informal learning. This often involves evaluation to improve the solutions and demonstrate the value of learning in organizations. Unfortunately, this is not always successful. Evaluation is one of the weakest links in most ISD models, and the quality of the methodology often varies significantly, from Gagné’s more scientific approach to ADDIE’s general problem-solving model.

One exception is the scientifically based methodology of the 4C-ID model (Merriënboer and Kirschner, 2012). This comprises ten steps to learning and training solutions design, and takes account of the increasing difficulty of task learning, the supporting information required to carry out the task, just-in-time procedural information, and practicing routines as subtasks.

Another more overarching methodology is human performance improvement (or technology), which is essentially a problem-solving strategy. Its strength lies in its system-level analysis, in which quantified performance is associated with factors or causes that influence the performance of people in the organization. The analysis often finds that formal learning intervention is not the only solution, or even the solution at all. The model is less strong in the architecture and implementation of a mix of formal or informal learning or organizational solutions. This is clear from our many years’ experience of HPT at Tulser.

When it comes to evaluation, every L&D professional immediately thinks of Donald Kirkpatrick and Jack Philips. Kirkpatrick uses a four-level evaluation for formal learning solutions that demonstrate business impact at the highest level.

Philips goes one step further with level 5, Return On Investment, showing the value of professional learning in a qualitative and quantitative manner.
The 70:20:10 Methodology

From 10 To 70:20:10

It is clear that learning in organizations extends beyond formal methods. For many professionals, it is logical that continuous development throughout their working careers is essential if they are to improve their performance.

Formal learning solutions such as training, eLearning or coaching (10) are simply not enough. Professionals learn mostly by working together (20 and 70). Yet reviews and research (Towards Maturity, 2017) report that formal learning solutions are still the principal offering from L&D.

Although there are many formal learning solutions (10) with added social learning (20), this approach is not to be confused with 70:20:10. In these cases, the 20 is designed to be part of formal learning solutions. We refer to this as a 10+ approach.

The same applies to workplace assignments that are designed within formal learning to add observation, reflection or experimentation in the workplace. This is also a 10+ approach because the design adds workplace practice to formal learning.

With 70:20:10, it is important to start by identifying the desired organizational results, followed by a process based on reasoning back from those results and to design solutions utilizing 70, 20 and 10 approaches, in that order.

70:20:10 solutions need to be consistent with the core business objectives of organizations, to focus on performance outcomes. To achieve this, it is necessary for L&D to adopt new roles and new approaches. These new roles and new processes form the basis of the 70:20:10 methodology.

Reason For The Development Of The 70:20:10 Methodology

For most professionals, working and learning are connected in a natural way. At least, they understand their development is not limited to the formal learning they undertake.

By working, people learn (often unconsciously) to solve problems, to collaborate, to sustainably improve, to renew, and so on.

In addition, the 70:20:10 methodology moves beyond the competence models for L&D, as a standardized method. The 70:20:10 methodology clearly states how to act to achieve results.

Additionally, with the 70:20:10 methodology it is possible to consistently connect with the desired organizational results and demonstrate business impact. This reinforces the L&D function: Helping L&D move from learning value to business value.
There are general benefits of using a methodology. We also work on the assumption that the 70:20:10 methodology is, and remains, in continual development as it is important that any methodology has the flexibility to be consistently improved and renewed on the basis of scientific research, expert input and experience in practice.

**The 70:20:10 Methodology: 5 Roles And 31 Critical Tasks**

The 70:20:10 methodology comprises 5 new roles and 31 critical tasks that have been defined for L&D and other professionals involved in continuous improvement projects.

For each role, a series of critical tasks has been developed that is derived from the identified results to be achieved, see Figure 1.
The Roles And Critical Tasks

Role: Performance Detective

The Performance Detective analyses performance problems in a systematic way. This involves carrying out business, performance and root-cause analysis whose outcomes provide the input for the Performance Architect.

Tasks: The Performance Detective works to:

- Obtain the client’s commitment.
- Determine the critical business issue.
- Define the core process.
- Define the current performance.
- Determine the desired performance.
- Determine the performance gap.
- Map the influences in the work environment.
- List the critical tasks.
- Prioritize the influences.

Role: Performance Architect

The Performance Architect co-creates prototypes that solve individual and organisational performance problems. He or she designs for the 100 using a set of agile principles, has an open mind and works in a structured way. The Architect validates the design with the key client before it goes to the Performance Master Builder.

Tasks: The Performance Architect works to:

- Design the 100.
- Validate and agree the design.

Role: Performance Master Builder

The Performance Master Builder uses the critical tasks as a starting point and co-creates effective solutions based on the Performance Architect’s design. He or she uses standardised processes and checklists to bring together resources and tasks to achieve an effective, fully developed solution as the outcome.
Tasks: The Performance Master Builder works to:

• Prepare 702010 solutions.
• Review 702010 solutions.
• Co-create Performance support.
• Co-create the unlocking of information sources.
• Co-create challenges.
• Co-create cooperation.
• Co-create sharing.
• Co-create improvement.
• Co-create solutions to memorize.
• Co-create formal learning solutions.

Role: Performance Game Changer

The Performance Game Changer emphasizes the development of new mindsets and implements the solutions created by the Master Builder. He or she achieves continuous enhancement and connects with the culture of the organization to ensure a lasting improvement in performance.

Tasks: The Performance Game Changer works to:

• Make a connection and co-create the conditions.
• Direct communication and collaboration.
• Build effective teams.
• Establish a 702010 program plan.
• Support line management.
• Make a master plan to embed 702010.

Role: Performance Tracker

The Performance Tracker identifies what constitutes success for the stakeholders. He or she develops and implements a measurement plan. He or she also reports performance improvement to the key client.

Tasks: The Performance Tracker works to:

Create a measurement plan.
Collect and analyze the data.
Report and communicate the results.
Monitor and adjust during the 702010 process.
Cyclical Processes

The 70:20:10 methodology comprises five new roles that are connected dynamically and should not be performed sequentially. Their application is a cyclical process. See Figure 2 for an overview of the new processes, roles and results that L&D needs to provide 70:20:10 services with business impact.

70:20:10 Methodology

With this process approach, utilizing the five roles and the critical tasks, there is a methodology. A methodology is described as follows:

A methodology is a standardized, carefully considered way of acting to achieve a specific result with assistance. Working methodically is to do so in a systematic, goal-oriented, process- and development-based way, and may include various methods.

The 70:20:10 methodology complies with the stated criteria:
• **Goal-oriented.**
The 70:20:10 methodology is targeted because, per role, a predetermined result has been established.

• **Systematic.**
With the five roles and the 31 critical tasks, it is possible to work systematically and step by step.

• **Standards-based.**
For each role critical, tasks have been formulated that consist of different task steps. The critical tasks and task steps together form the standards that follow the 70:20:10 methodology.

• **Process-based.**
The five roles are performed dynamically and cyclically in a process-like manner, see Figure 1.

• **Method-based.**
The 70:20:10 methodology includes a series of methods that contribute to the performance of the roles and critical tasks.

Table 1 gives an overview of methods that can be used per role. Some methods are so extensive that there is a methodology for them as well. For example, the 4I-CD model (Merriënboer, Kirschner) as a method of designing formal learning solutions. The **ROI methodology of Jack Phillips** is a methodology for determining the financial element of value.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Author</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Performance Detective</td>
<td>Performance DNA</td>
<td>Mankin (Mankin &amp; McGraw, 2014), Harless (Harless, 1975)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Define core processes</td>
<td>Mankin (2014)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Influence analysis</td>
<td>Rummler (Rummler &amp; Brache, 2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Critical Task Analysis</td>
<td>Mankin (2014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Performance Architect</td>
<td>Design the 100</td>
<td>Arets, Jennings, Heijnen (Arets, Jennings, &amp; Heijnen, 2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Agile Designing</td>
<td>Archer (2014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Performance Master</td>
<td>Toolbox 70 solutions</td>
<td>Arets, Jennings, Heijnen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Builder</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Reviewing and validating 70, 20, and 10 solutions</td>
<td>Arets, Jennings, Heijnen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Performance Support with the 5 moments of need</td>
<td>Mosher, Gottfredson (Gottfredson &amp; Mosher, 2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Working Memory organizations with performance support as driver</td>
<td>Arets, Jennings, Heijnen</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Job-Demands-Resources-model</td>
<td>Bakker (Bakker, A.e.a 2006)</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Observing and learning from the Exemplary Performer</td>
<td>Elliot (Elliott &amp; Folsom, 2013)</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Toolbox 20 solutions</td>
<td>Arets, Jennings, Heijnen</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Designing and implementing Social Learning</td>
<td>Hart(2017)</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Community of Practice (CoP)</td>
<td>Wenger (Wenger, McDermott, &amp; Snyder, 2002)</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Community management</td>
<td>Arets, Jennings, Heijnen</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Continuous Improvement (PDCA) by teams</td>
<td>Deming(Deming, 2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Feedback model</td>
<td>Arets, Heijnen (2007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Toolbox 10 solutions</td>
<td>Arets, Jennings, Heijnen</td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Learning User Experience</td>
<td>Gutiérrez</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>Architecture content learning solutions</td>
<td>Clark (2012)</td>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Mobile learning</td>
<td>Quinn (2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Personal Knowledge Management (PKM)</td>
<td>Jarché (2017)</td>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Performance Game Changer</td>
<td>Implementing 3R-model</td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>5 colors of change approach</td>
<td>De Caluwé, Vermaak (Caluwé, Léon &amp; Vermaak, 2006)</td>
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</table>
The 70:20:10 methodology is descriptive in the five roles and the 31 critical tasks. At the same time it is open to other methods and methodologies, so that the most effective solutions are consistently possible. As our overall field of study is, and remains, in development, this also applies to the 70:20:10 methodology. Let us improve our methodology and, where necessary, renew it.

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<td>De Caluwé, Vermaak (Caluwé, Léon &amp; Vermaak, 2006)</td>
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<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Project management</td>
<td>Verzuuh, E. (2011)</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Performance Tracker</td>
<td>Business KPIs to measure the impact of 70 and 20 solutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>4 levels of evaluations of learning impact</td>
<td>Kirkpatrick (Kirkpatrick, D.L e.a. 2007)</td>
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<td>32</td>
<td>ROI of learning value</td>
<td>Phillips (Phillips e.a., 2007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>5 cycles of Value creation</td>
<td>Wenger, Trayner, De Laat</td>
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<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Talent Development Reporting principles model</td>
<td>Vance (Vance, D.e.a, 2014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Business Case of learning and performance solutions</td>
<td>Arets, Jennings, Heijnen</td>
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<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Blueprint evaluation</td>
<td>Arets (2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Reporting and communicating the results</td>
<td>Mankin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Examples of methods per role within the 70:20:10 methodology

Finally
Author

Jos Arets

Co-Founder, The 70:20:10 Institute and owner/CEO of Tulser B.V.
Role: Developing new content, writing books, contact person for Business Partnerships.

For many years Jos has worked on improving the performance of people and organisations by connecting working and learning in smart ways. This work has been through a mixture of strategic projects with clients and international collaboration within the L&D community. Jos’s strength lies in designing performance driven solution at a systems level and working in the role of a Performance Architect. In collaboration with Charles Jennings and Vivian Heijnen he has published articles and books about learning and performance, measurable performance improvement and about 70:20:10.
Literature

• Quinn, C. (2011). Designing MLearning. Tapping into the Mobile Revolution for Organizational
results through people, processes and organization.
org on May 6,2017)
• Wenger, E., B. Trayner & M. De Laat. (2011). Promoting and assessing value creation in communities and
The 70:20:10 Institute

The 70:20:10 Institute has been established in response to widespread international demand for information about what the 70:20:10 model involves and how it can be used.

The Institute works collaboratively with organisations across the world. We help exploit the potential of 70:20:10 as a robust approach that strengthens and aligns learning and development (L&D) with organisational performance needs. We are working to create L&D strategies and solutions with performance and (organisational) learning power.

We see 70:20:10 as a movement rather than a solution. It is a movement whose aim is to deploy more effective and efficient approaches for building high performance faster than the speed of business.

The Institute is open, collaborative and inclusive in nature. We partner with businesses that are supporting 70:20:10 and with L&D departments and other parts of organisations that are using 70:20:10. We also partner with experts across the world whose work is leading the way to extend beyond formal learning.

The Institute offers help and support through a 70:20:10 expert programme, publications, and through a set of resources we make available for use by business partners and organisations that are using 70:20:10 to improve learning and performance.

More information?

For more information about us and our services, please visit:
www.702010institute.com

If you have questions, you can always email us:
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