

Job Analysis Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As the profession of health literacy has evolved, support has grown to define the body of knowledge and determine whether the time has come for professionals to be credentialed by establishing a certification examination for health literacy. The Institute for Healthcare Advancement (IHA) commissioned this job analysis to provide responses to this question.

A job analysis is designed to obtain descriptive information about the tasks performed in a job and the knowledge needed to adequately perform those tasks. The purpose of this job analysis was to:

- develop and validate the listing of the tasks and knowledge related to work performed by individuals who specialize in health literacy;
- develop test specifications for a possible health literacy examination;
- obtain useful information that can guide educational and professional development initiatives; and,
- ensure that IHA has up-to-date information about expected changes in health literacy professionals' job roles over the next few years.

Conduct of the Job Analysis

The job analysis consisted of several activities: collaboration with subject-matter experts to ensure representativeness of the tasks and knowledge; survey development; survey dissemination; compilation of survey results; and test specifications development. The successful outcome of the job analysis depended on the excellent information provided by individuals, who specialize in health literacy, throughout the study.

Survey Development

Survey research is an efficient and effective way to identify the tasks and knowledge that are important in the field of health literacy. The tasks included on the survey covered seven domains of practice across 53 tasks statements and 41 knowledge statements. The development of the survey was based on a draft of tasks and knowledge developed from a variety of resources (e.g., a draft list of content areas developed by Prometric and IHA based on a detailed literature review) and active participation of individuals, who specialize in health literacy, who served on the Task Force Committee and as Survey Pilot Test respondents.

Survey Content

The survey, disseminated in September 2016, consisted of five sections.

Survey Sections
Section 1: Background and General Information
Section 2: Tasks Statements
Section 3: Knowledge Statements
Section 4: Recommendation for Emphasis of Content
Section 5: Comments

Results

Survey Response Rate

The Health Literacy Job Analysis Survey was disseminated by IHA using an open participation link emailed to individuals who specialize in health literacy. Of the 523 professionals who started the survey, a total of 334 (64%) participants submitted completed surveys. Completed surveys were identified based on respondents who finished at least 55%. A representative group of individuals who specialize in health literacy completed the survey in sufficient numbers to meet the requirements for conducting statistical analysis. This is evidenced by review of the responses for each of the background and general information questions as well as confirmation by the Test Specifications Committee.

Survey Ratings

Participants were asked to rate the tasks and knowledge by the importance for an individual who specializes in the area of health literacy using a five point scale (0 = Of no importance to 4 = Very important).

Content Coverage

Evidence was provided for the comprehensiveness of the content coverage within the domains. That is, if the tasks and knowledge within a domain are well defined, then it should be judged as being well covered. Respondents indicated that the content within each task and knowledge domain was well to very well covered, thus supporting the comprehensiveness of the defined domains.

Write-in Comments

Survey respondents answered four open-ended questions about professional development or continuing education needs, expected changes in their work role, reason for seeking a health literacy credential, and a general comments question.

Test Specifications Development

On March 27, 2017, a Test Specifications Committee convened to review the results of the job analysis and to create the test content outline that may guide the development of a health literacy examination.

RESULTS AT A GLANCE

WHO COMPLETED THE SURVEY

A total of 334 responses were used for analysis. The majority of respondents have a Master's Degree, reside in the U.S., work full time, and speak English as their primary language.

TASKS IMPORTANCE RATINGS

A total of 53 of 53 tasks achieved high importance ratings for the overall group. Respondents indicated that the survey covered the important tasks "well" to "very well."

KNOWLEDGE IMPORTANCE RATINGS

A total of 41 of 41 knowledge/skills achieved high importance ratings for the overall group. Respondents indicated that the survey covered the important knowledge/skills "well" to "very well."

Summary

In summary, this study used a multi-method approach in identifying the tasks and knowledge that are important to the competent performance of individuals who specialize in health literacy. The job analysis process allowed for input from a representative group of individuals who are involved in health literacy and was conducted within the guidelines of professionally sound practice. The results of the job analysis can be used by IHA to develop a health literacy examination and guide professional development initiatives.