# Performance Descriptions:
# A Major Tool for Performance Development

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## Abstract

*A primary goal of Process Education has always been to improve performance. This is accomplished by assessing specific performances and developing action plans to improve upon both processes inherent in the performance and specific supporting learning skills thereby improving the performance. This article offers steps toward determining what exactly constitutes a performance and a performance description. It also introduces a new methodology for writing performance descriptions and offers several models of performance descriptions. We have produced 23 examples of performance descriptions that span three major performance areas. These performance descriptions can serve as exemplars for future performance description development, a basis for writing performance criteria and developing measures, and used -as is- to assist students in learning situations.*

## Introduction

Over the last 25 years, Pacific Crest has been offering Learning to Learn Camps (Apple, et al., 2015) and now Academic Recovery courses (Wenner, et al., 2018) that focus on two major performances for development: learning to learn (Apple and Ellis, 2015) and self-growth (Jain et al., 2015). The target of the Learning to Learn Camps was to significantly improve both performances. As discovered in 2015, when the Process Education understanding of learning was expanded from a primary focus on process to focus on developing performance, the student growth in learning performance increased significantly (Apple & Leasure, 2018).

Less understood and agreed upon is exactly what constitutes a performance. Dictionary definitions are too broad to be meaningful in a Process Education context. Some variation of the "execution of an action" is common. Because of the inherent vagueness of the term *performance*, providing a description of a performance is difficult as well.

## Research Questions

In Process Education, assessment and evaluation of a given performance has been constrained by the degree to which the description of the performance highlights the potential depth and breadth of the performance. This article raises and addresses three research questions in an effort to advance the appreciation and application of performance descriptions as they are used in developing performance. These questions are:

1. What makes a performance a performance and not another activity type?
2. What makes a quality performance description?

3. What are the necessary characteristics of a performance description, if that description is to be used to do the following:
   - Aid the development of performance for both performer and coach
   - Develop performance criteria (Apple, 2019) and measures (Kline et al., 2003)
   - Assess and evaluate performance

## Research Methods

This article will clarify what is meant by *performance* in a Process Education context. The authors provide a set of characteristics of a performance, explaining as needed. The article also describes what constitutes an adequate performance description, shares the methodology for writing performance descriptions developed over the past year, and provides numerous examples (23) of performance descriptions in the critical performance areas of learning, self-growth (Appendix A), and life (Appendix B).

### What Makes a Performance a Performance?

While researchers who study performance have not come to consensus on what qualifies as a performance (Schechner, 2002), they have identified common characteristics of a performance. By analyzing a given activity in light of these characteristics, we can determine whether or not the activity constitutes a performance. The characteristics identified and enumerated following were developed with an academic setting in mind. The examples that demonstrate the characteristics are broadly applicable beyond an academic setting, but this article focuses most closely on *academic* performance.

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## Characteristics of Performance

Within an educational setting, instructors very generally perform teaching while students very generally perform learning. What say "very generally" because both teaching and learning are made up of many discrete performances as well as non-performance activities that take place over the course of a class, activity, semester, or other learning session(s). Measurement of the instructor's overall performance is captured by student survey, usually at semester's end. Measurement of the students' performance is typically captured at multiple points during the semester by test grades or assignment scores. Advancements in learning sciences, educational practices and the development of educational theories has shifted the performance focus from the instructor to the learner as the primary performer in the educational system (Apple et al., 2016). With this perspective, we have identified those critical characteristics that help to differentiate performances from non-performances. This understanding has the potential to expand learning and broaden what can be assessed in a teaching-learning environment. The following characteristics can be used to determine if an activity can be considered a performance or performance-like enough to make assessment worthwhile.

It has…

1. External expectations (goals, desired quality, defined constraints)

2. Internal expectations (values, opportunity, growth)

3. Performer(s) (individuals/things involved in carrying out the performance)

4. Stakeholder(s) (those who care about the specific performance)

5. A time dimension (productive use in preparation, in performance, in reflecting on the performance)

6. Actions (set of attributes of how the performer carries out the performance)

7. A public or semi-public social context (where, when, and why for the performance)

8. An underlying process or structure (particularly strong performances have a plan that reflects the underlying process or structure)

9. Results that are an experience or product for others

10. A generalizable description

11. A reaction and feedback system

A tentative definition of a *performance* might read "A time-bound activity that an individual engages in, for a purpose important to themselves and others, where improvement is possible and both the performance itself and improvements in the performance can be measured."

When considering performances, a major consideration is when a general life activity becomes a performance. For example, singing is an activity in which many people participate. Some sing daily because they find it an enjoyable experience. When does singing become a performance? In the shower? As part of a church congregation? When participating as part of a church choir? When singing a solo in a choir? When attending a play, sporting event, or musical recital, we (hopefully) enjoy the experience of others performing and we may find it pleasant (identifying quality). When are we performing? Individuals may invest a great deal of time over many days, weeks, months, or years before producing an intended outcome. What is the difference between a performance and productive work? When we engage in a routine activity (e.g., driving) is it a performance? When we invest a great deal of time to develop a skill or competency, such as playing a sport, an instrument, writing a novel, woodworking, gardening, etc., are we performing? Our goal is to work towards classifying life activities into different categories (some of which are delineated following) so that processes can be developed to improve the quality of these activities. Following, we discuss several life activities and highlight the differences between those and performances, using the 11 characteristics of performance.

### Life Activities that Are Not Performances

In researching what constitutes a performance, we have discovered activities that are often confused with performances, but which we consider other important types of activity. These types include **Deliberate Practice** ("just-in-time" learning, practice, and rehearsing), **Experiences** (enjoying others performing or life in general), **Doing** (tasks that must be done but which aren't challenging, i.e., repetitive tasks), and **Productive Work** (things such as publishing a research paper or designing a new orientation process).

> **Deliberate practice** is a highly structured activity with the specific goal of improving performance (Ericsson, 2004). It is a precursor to performance, but not a performance in itself. For example, to become an excellent performer in basketball, a point guard might have to learn how to complete a cross-over dribble so they can more quickly change direction on the basketball court (learning). Once they understand the process and mechanics, they will have to drill, focusing on how to quicken this skill without losing control of the ball (practice). Finally, in order to use the cross-over dribble in a game, the point guard needs to start using it in scrimmages (rehearsal).

Note that for this first activity, each characteristic is addressed in turn. For the remainder of the activities we highlight only where the characteristics of a performance are **not** present. Deliberate practice has a performer with internal and external expectations. It does not necessarily have external stakeholders. Even a basketball coach does not care so much about the deliberate practice as about the *results* of the deliberate practice. Time is invested in deliberate practice, and actions are taken and measured. However, there is no public social context in which deliberate practice takes place. There are underlying processes, dependent upon what specifically is being practiced. Although deliberate practice produces improvement leading to increased performance, the practice itself does not produce results defined as "the producing of an experience or product for others." Some deliberate practice is surely able to be generalized with a description, and there must be, in order for deliberate practice to be effective, a reaction and feedback system. Therefore, deliberate practice is not a performance because it lacks external stakeholders (4), a public social context (7) and results that are an experience for others (9).

A performance produces an **Experience** in a social context that impacts others' thoughts, actions or behaviors. If you appreciate another's performance, recordings of performances, products of performance, or productive work, you find that it impacts your thoughts, actions, or behaviors. There are additional types of experiences that constitute appreciating various aspect of life, such as nature during a walk on the beach or on a trail in the mountains. Experiences could also include time spent with family, friends, and community whether impromptu or in a more formal gathering such as on a holiday.

Experiences may or may not have external or internal expectations (1, 2). It is safe to assume all people experience some things without an expectation of any kind. There may or may not be stakeholders (4) for a particular experience. Watching a sunset, for example is certainly an experience, but while the individuals engaging in the act probably hope for beauty, it would be safe to say they don't expect a particular outcome, and they certainly couldn't be described as stakeholders. (The sun itself "setting" is only an outcome if there is actually some uncertainty as to whether or not it will, in which case we would become stakeholders.) Experiences may or may not take place in a public social context (7). An underlying process is unnecessary in many experiences (8). The experience may or may not be generalizable (10), and a feedback system is unnecessary for any individual experience (11).

Nevertheless, we cannot deny that if an experience were identified that had all 11 characteristics, that it might also qualify as a performance. It is far more likely, however, that this experience could be transformed into a performance. This is an interesting focus for future research.

**Productive Work** is time spent to produce value that is recognized by many stakeholders and persists beyond the person(s) producing this work. There are many different types of productive work including writing reports, building systems, creating processes, building teams, or producing research. Key differences between productive work and performance are that the time to produce productive work is often not limited the same way it is in a performance (5), there may be a (public) social context for the results, but not for the productive work itself (7) and the result of productive work does not always yield an experience or product for others (9) in the same way that a performance does.

**Doing** is the unconscious (or rote) repeating of past activity where the challenge has disappeared from the activity. When we walk through an activity that doesn't provide any personal return and just uses up our time, we are not receiving quality though this is often justification for the doing in that it leads to things other than future tasks. A simple example of doing is driving from place to place, such as from home to the grocery store. There are rarely external expectations for these tasks (1). There may or may not be a time dimension, but when there is it is often relatively unimportant (5). Some tasks are done in a public social context, whereas others are not (7). Things we do seldom result in a product or experience for others (9), and when a task has been routinized to the point where we do it rather than perform it, it is unlikely there is reaction or feedback (11). However, many things that can be done can also be performed. While driving is usually not a performance, Formula One racing is (for example). The transformation of a doing task into a performance task is another potentially fruitful area for future research.

### What is a Performance Description?

A performance description identifies the ingredients of the performance for all stakeholders (sponsors, organizations, coaches, participants, evaluators, and performers). It clarifies what is required and what adds to the quality of the performance. The description also clarifies the full opportunities that produce greater quality and what is essential to producing this quality. The following are components that make up a performance description:

- The underlying process
- Necessary abilities of the performer
- Disciplinary knowledge that the performer requires
- Interdisciplinary knowledge that the performer requires
- Mindset and identity of a high-level performer
- Ranked list of the most critical learning skills required to increase the performance

The following criteria positively impact the description's quality:

It…

- Is a descriptive narrative illustrating what the performance is
- Identifies the underlying process and flow
- Highlights key learning skills to enhance performer capability
- Clarifies the details of the performer's identity
- Indicates the knowledge requirement of the performer (disciplinary and interdisciplinary)
- Provides meaningful contextual details
- Is concise
- Is comprehensive

**Uses and Benefits of Performance Descriptions**

In Process Education, there are many established practices and performance expectations that stand to benefit from the availability of performance descriptions. A recent article by Leasure, et al., (2020) provides a framework for learning by performance (LxP; see Figure 1). Within this framework, shared and agreed upon performance descriptions are necessary to facilitate performance development. Further, performance descriptions will be valuable in Learning to Learn courses and Camps, (Apple, et al., 2015) as well as Academic Recovery Courses, (Wenner et al., 2018). In addition, performance descriptions are an important input in the Methodology for Writing Performance Criteria (Utschig, 2007) and writing performance measures (Kline, et al., 2003). High quality performance descriptions should lead to higher quality performance criteria and measures. A final and potentially important use of performance descriptions is for generating consensus among faculty across the curriculum for general education outcomes.

**Different Types of Performances**

There are at least seven important dimensions of performance into which any specific performance could fall.

Each dimension has at least three possible categories within it. Each is meaningful to consider when writing a performance description. For the taxonomy developed so far, there are over 1,800 possible dimension-category matches into which any performance could be sorted. It would be impossible to provide examples for each dimension-category, so the authors have included the previously mentioned 23 performance descriptions as a foundation upon which future descriptions can be developed. We feel this representative sample includes a diversity of performance areas that represent the variability in the dimensions of performance characterizations, providing a relevant example for most purposes. These examples should also guide general education stakeholders in a similar manner and further, they will serve as a means to produce key performance measures, and support performance development as represented in the LxP framework (Figure 1). The list below defines the seven dimensions and lists the categories (in parentheses) relevant to that dimension.

> **Domain of the Classification of Learning Skills:** which primary domain of the Classification of Learning skills is the focus of the performance area (cognitive, affective, social, psychomotor, assessment and evaluation)
>
> **Self-Concept:** the identity, self-image, efficacy, values, and beliefs the performer brings to their performance (performer, producer, artist, thinker, self-grower, caring)
>
> **Outcomes:** the primary intent of the performance that will produce the expected quality (experience, result, tangible artifact, improved state)
>
> **Expertise:** how was the performer's expertise (disciplinary and interdisciplinary) developed (formal development, organic, certified)
>
> **Social Exposure:** the nature of how much of the actions and the outcomes will be viewed by the public (minimal, marginal, extensive)
>
> **Stakeholders:** who is the primary stakeholder of the performance (external, internal, indirect)
>
> **Feedback System:** The nature of the feedback the performer traditionally receives from doing this performance (measurement, assessment, evaluation, reaction, reflection, and assessment & evaluation together)

It is entirely possible that more dimensions will be uncovered, especially as performances outside of academia are fitted with performance descriptions. Further, it is important to note that the category list is representational as well, and there are likely additional categories in at least some of these dimensions.

While there are an infinite number of performances the

authors could have chosen from to analyze and present in this manuscript. The performances selected were based on the observation that a primary focus of effort in the psychology of learning and success literature is to engage students in the performances of learning, self-growth, and key life areas (Jain et al., 2019). These three performance areas are each composed of supporting performances. For example, the development of learning performance can be strengthened by improving performances in reading for learning, writing to think, elevating learning through critical thinking, generalizing, problem solving, and metacognitive reasoning. Similarly, self-growth performance can be strengthened by improving performances in analyzing self, analyzing performance, self-assessing, reflecting, receiving evaluative feedback and self-mentoring. Finally,

performing in life can be strengthened by improving planning, preparing to perform, performing publicly, teaming, communicating, building healthy relationships, managing finances, and taking care of self.

The 23 performance areas listed in Table 1 have been developed using the Methodology for Writing Performance Descriptions and validated in Academic Recovery courses by students, coaches who aid in performance development, evaluators who judge student work products, and the institutions involved who used them to determine which students were eligible for readmission.

In analyzing the variety of categories for these 23 performance areas (Table 1), it is noteworthy that each performance area has its own unique set of categories. This

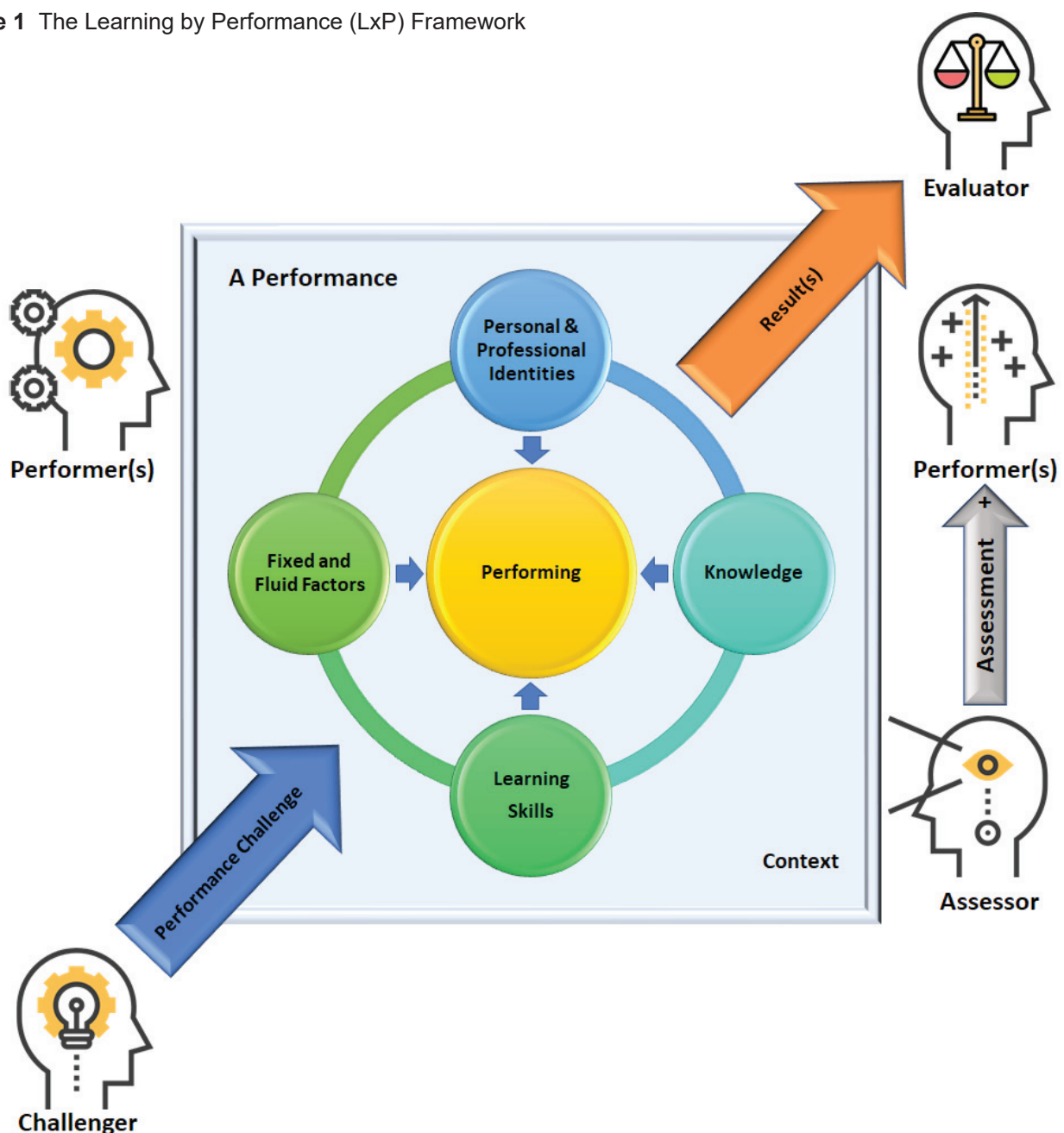**Figure 1** The Learning by Performance (LxP) Framework

**Table 1** Inventory of Categories for the 23 Performance Descriptions

| Performance Area | Learning Skill Domain | Self-Concept | Outcome | Social Exposure | Expertise Developed | Stake-holders | Feedback |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Learning | Cognitive | Producer | Result | Minimal | Organic | Indirect | Evaluative |
| Reading | Cognitive | Producer | Result | Minimal | Formal | External | Measurement |
| Writing to Think | Cognitive | Thinker | Tangible artifact | Marginal | Organic | Internal | Assessment |
| Elevate Critical Thinking | Cognitive | Thinker | Improved state | Extensive | Organic | Internal | Reaction |
| Generalizing | Cognitive | Producer | Result | Minimal | Organic | Indirect | Evaluative |
| Problem Solving | Cognitive | Thinker | Result | Extensive | Organic | External | Evaluative |
| Metacognitive Reasoning | Cognitive | Thinker | Improved state | Minimal | Formal | Internal | Reflection |
| Self-Growth | Affective | Self-Grower | Improved state | Minimal | Organic | Internal | Reflection |
| Self-Analysis | Affective | Thinker | Improved state | Minimal | Organic | Internal | Assessment |
| Performance Analysis | Cognitive | Thinker | Tangible artifact | Marginal | Formal | Internal | Assessment |
| Self-Assessing | Assess.& Eval. | Self-Grower | Improved state | Minimal | Formal | Internal | Assessment |
| Reflecting | Assess.& Eval. | Self-Grower | Improved state | Minimal | Organic | Internal | Reflection |
| Receiving Evaluative Feedback | Assess.& Eval. | Self-Grower | Improved state | Extensive | Formal | External | Evaluative |
| Self-Mentoring | Affective | Self-Grower | Improved state | Minimal | Organic | Internal | Assessment |
| Life Performances | Affective | Producer | Results | Minimal | Organic | External | Reactions |
| Planning | Cognitive/Affective | Producer | Tangible artifact | Minimal | Formal | External | Reactions |
| Preparing | Cognitive/Affective | Performer | Improved state | Minimal | Formal | Internal | Assessment |
| Performing Publicly | Affective | Performer | Experience | Extensive | Organic | External | Eval./Reaction |
| Teaming | Social | Performer | Results | Extensive | Formal | External | Evaluative |
| Communicating | Social | Thinker/ Performer | Experience | Marginal | Formal | External | Reaction |
| Building Healthy Relationships | Social | Caring | Experience | Marginal | Organic | External | Reaction |
| Managing Finances | Social | Thinker | Improved state | Marginal | Formal | External | Evaluative |
| Taking Care of Yourself | Psychomotor | Caring | Improved state | Minimal | Organic | Internal | Reaction |

is one of the key reasons the authors decided to append the remaining performance descriptions. When writing a performance description, this table can be used as a kind of index by comparing the potential new performance description with this list of existing performance descriptions. The closest match can then be used to inform the creation of the new performance description.

## Methodology for Writing Performance Descriptions

The methodology which follows was developed in conjunction with a 2018-2019 mentor-led self-growth program. There, the participants (including the authors) used the Methodology to Create Methodologies (Smith & Apple, 2007b) to create the Methodology for Writing Performance Descriptions. It has been through several iterations and represents the work of many, if not all the participants in the program, each of whom now has a great deal of expertise in self-growth and the methodologies related to it. This methodology describes the sequence of steps (activities) needed to create a high-quality performance description. Table 2 illustrates use of the Methodology to Create Methodologies to create the Methodology for Writing Performance Descriptions. Because the process is iterative in nature, this table, while containing information about all the steps, only shows the final results. A complete description of all the iterations in this process, though interesting, is beyond the scope of this article. The sequential series of steps created through this process (listed in step 6) was used to create every performance description appearing in this article and its appendices. A detailed example of its use follows, in the next section of this manuscript, with an example of its use added (Table 3) so that the description of each step could use the example to help understand and clarify the step.

## Model of the Development of a Performance Description for Learning

Once created and validated, the Methodology for Writing Performance Descriptions was used to build the performance descriptions in this article and its appendices. What follows is a detailed example of using the Methodology for Writing Performance Descriptions to write a performance description for "Learning". The final performance description appears directly following the table. The additional performance descriptions are presented afterward and are shown in final form, without stepwise explanation. The set of performance descriptions following "Learning" were selected to support the overall performance of learning. That is, performances in those areas (e.g., reading) are important to and supportive of the overall performance of learning. Performances in the appendices are organized similarly, with "Self-Growth" and "Performing in Life" being the primary performances, each with several key performances included to support the main performance.

The process detailed here led to the following Performance Description for Learning (see below). Steps are identified where they resulted in actual language that ended up in the final performance description.

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**Learning**

IDENTITY (Step 4) Life-long learners, who have self-efficacy, take responsibility and ownership of their learning whether in college, career or personal life (Apple & Ellis, 2015). PROCESS (Step 1) They are collegiate learners who understand how to learn and use learning processes to construct knowledge (Watts, 2018). When they approach learning something new, they motivate themselves by stating a "why" for learning and guide their efforts by stating learning objectives. They construct knowledge from resources by noting relevant vocabulary, locating relevant information, and collecting examples and expert models during their informational processing and reading performances. They think critically to produce meaning and understanding (especially in writing), and then contextualize and generalize to elevate their knowledge to the level of working expertise. At the end of a learning cycle, the learners self-assess and reflect on their learning process and learning skills to improve their next learning performance. EXPAND (Step 6) To pull it all together, they use metacognition (thinking about their thinking), knowing how they do what they do, and why they decided to do what they are doing. In each of their efforts, they prepare for social learning, stay healthy, actively engage, and collaborate within and outside learning experiences by communicating, asking questions, thinking critically and sharing insights publicly and in writing. IDENTITY (Step 4) They effectively plan to manage their time and resources and are disciplined in carrying out their plans. They enjoy learning challenges and accept failure as a frequent and productive path to success. They are positive with a growth mindset, intellectually curious, and supportive of others in team learning. They apply their learning in new contexts by using higher-order thinking to contextualize and generalize their knowledge to solve complex problems.

**Learning Skills** Thinking skeptically, Recognizing contradictions, transferring, abstracting, following principles

**Table 2** Using the Methodology to Create Methodologies to Create a Methodology for Writing Performance Descriptions

| Step | Description | Application of the Step to the Methodology for Writing Performance Descriptions |
|------|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | **Starting and end points (direction)** | Picking a performance area and finishing with a solid review of its use across multiple context |
| 2 | **Identify the key issues** | What is the identity of the performance? <br><br> What are the supporting or required learning skills? <br><br> What are consistent context conditions for the performance? <br><br> What are the critical performance capabilities? <br><br> Who are the stakeholders and how is the performance viewed publicly? <br><br> What are the expectations, both internal and external? <br><br> What are the key actions that the performers uses? |
| 3 | **What is the larger process or system where the methodology is used?** | 1. The Methodology for Writing Performance Criteria <br> 2. Performance Development Methodology (Leise, 2007) <br> 3. Methodology for Creating Performance Measures (Pacific Crest, 2012) <br> 4. Facilitation Methodology (Smith & Apple, 2007a), especially when the learning outcomes are learning to learn |
| 4 | **Set criteria for process and its results** | Process criteria: <br> • Incorporates all stakeholder perspectives <br> • Useful for defining performance criteria applicable for practice, rehearsal, performance, assessment, and turning evaluation into assessment <br> • Spans all dimensions of quality <br> • Produces descriptive writing <br> • Uses expert coaches and performers in its development <br><br> Results criteria: <br> • It is a descriptive narrative that illustrates what the performance is <br> • Identifies the underlying process and flow <br> • Highlights key learning skills to enhance performer capability <br> • Clarifies the details of the performer's identity <br> • Indicates the knowledge requirement of the performer (disciplinary and interdisciplinary) <br> • Provides meaningful contextual details <br> • Concise <br> • Comprehensive |
| 5 | **Inventory information and resources** | 1. Learning to learn facilitators <br> 2. Designers of performance criteria <br> 3. Designers of performance measures <br> 4. Group of strong performers <br> 5. Experienced stakeholders <br> 6. LxP framework and authors <br> 7. Learning How to Learn: Improving the Performance of Learning (Apple & Ellis, 2015) |

**Table 2**  Using the Methodology to Create Methodologies in Order to Create a Methodology for Writing Performance Descriptions

| Step | Description | Application of the Step to the Methodology for Writing Performance Descriptions |
|---|---|---|
| 6 | **Model the steps sequentially** | 1. Process: Identify the key underlying process<br>2. Visualize: Imagine performances of quality performers in multiple contexts<br>3. Analyze: Determine the characteristics of quality<br>4. Identity Clarify the values and attitudes of the performers<br>5. Describe: Provide the expressive details and flow of the performance<br>6. Expand: Add richness by expanding new aspects of the performance<br>7. Add Learning Skills: Identify five supporting learning skills<br>8. External review: Have others edit and enrich description<br>9. Final Assessment: Use criteria to improve description |
| 7 | **Execute methodology** | The methodology was used 23 times, across a variety of very different performance areas, with edits to the methodology made each time an improvement area was found. |
| 8 | **Assess each step** | The process was assessed during Step 7, after each step of a new performance description with minor changes being made. For example, Step 6 – Identity was asking coaches and performers what ways of being they found essential for top-level performing. |
| 9 | **Facilitate the process and test the results** | After the first 10 were completed, additional authors were then facilitated as they worked to develop and improve the descriptions. After use of the results (performance descriptions), additional tests were done of other performance descriptions (as part of an academic recovery course sponsored by the Academy of Process Educators) |
| 10 | **Assess performance of the use of the methodology** | The product descriptions were used in two learning to learn academic recovery courses and one Self-Growth Institute (Pacific Crest, 2019) with feedback by the participants. The methodology was assessed and refined after new performance descriptions were created. |

In order to determine which learning skills (Step 7) to include in the performance description, participants in the Academy of Process Educators Self-Growth Community engaged self-reflection and group discussion, guided by the Classification of Learning Skills (CLS) online tool. Learning was determined to be primarily cognitive in nature, so the supporting learning skills were likely to come from that domain. Specifically within the cognitive domain, critical thinking and generalizing are integral to learning. *Critical thinking* is the "…mental processes, strategies, and representations people use to solve problems, make decisions, and learn new concepts" (Sternberg, 1986). *Generalizing* is the process of applying specific knowledge in new contexts, in order to create new understandings, or learning. Two of the included learning skills can be found in the CLS under Cognitive: Critical Thinking; the other three under Cognitive: Generalizing. These five learning skills are not the only skills supporting learning per-

formance, but they were determined to be the specific learning skills one could focus on for the most dramatic improvements in learning performance.

The six example performance descriptions which follow were selected not only because their mastery would provide support to the performance of learning, but also because they are a diverse set of performance descriptions in regard to self-concept, outcome, public nature, expertise developed, stakeholders, and type of feedback. This variety provides a varied set of exemplars to be used to build and assess other performance descriptions.

**Table 3** Methodology for Writing Performance Description: Learning

| Step | Description |
|---|---|
| | Example – Learning Performance |
| 1 Process | **Identify the key underlying process** |
| | This is the Learning Process Methodology (LPM; Watts, 2018) supported by additional methodologies linked to the LPM, like Reading (Apple, et al., 2013), Elevating Knowledge (Nygren, 2007b), Generalizing (Utschig 2019), and Problem Solving (Apple, et al., 2013) |
| 2 Visualize | **Imagine the performances of high-quality performers in multiple contexts** |
| | The LPM is used to design activities, facilitate learning, assess learning, and used for self-directed learning by faculty, students, professionals, and in everyday life. Use the mental models of the best learners in learning situations |
| 3 Analyze | **Determine the characteristics of quality using the quality framework** |
| | In using the Quality Framework Model (El-Sayed et al., 2020) with four quadrants, overall fit, and three criteria for each, the following 15 criteria were identified: Learning Process, Collaborative, Metacognitive, Self-efficacy, Reflector, Wellness, Grit, Cognitive Skills, Physical Fitness, Growth Mindset, LPM, Growth Skills, Collegiate Learner, Learning Skills, Self-Growth Skills |
| 4 Identity | **In an initial statement, clarify the values and attitudes of the performers** |
| | The Profile of a Quality Collegiate Learner illustrates the identity of a master learner who has developed a strong learning performance (Apple, Duncan, et al., 2016) |
| 5 Describe | **Provide the expressive details sequentially that follow the flow of the performance** |
| | Apple and Ellis describe learning performance (2015) that consists of 13 components and with a description of each component, but not an integrated description |
| 6 Expand | **Add richness to the description by expanding other aspects of the performance** |
| | For this article, the authors expanded the descriptions in Step 5 to integrate and add to its dimensions using the criteria from Step 3 |
| 7 Add Learning Skills | **Identify five (5) supporting learning skills** |
| | The typical choice of three learning skills for a single activity was expanded to five most important learning skills that are underdeveloped for that specific performance area. When these five learning skills are enhanced, they will strengthen the performance significantly. In this case the choices were: <br><br>• **Thinking skeptically:** testing against fundamental principles/schemas <br>• **Recognizing contradictions:** identifying when results violate fundamental principles/schemas <br>• **Transferring:** using ideas, analogies, or patterns in a new context <br>• **Abstracting:** capturing the essence from concrete examples or instances <br>• **Following principles:** ensuring the compatibility of knowledge with context |
| 8 External review | **Edit and enrich the missing elements in the description** |
| | Two of the authors collaborated to produce the initial descriptions, with the other authors assessing these descriptions to improve them. They were then presented at the 2019 Process Education Conference for additional feedback (Ellis & Moore, 2019). |
| 9 Final Assessment | **Use criteria of a quality description (Step 3) to enhance the quality of the description** |
| | After 10 weeks, the criteria of a quality description were used as an aid in assessing and improving each of the 23 performance descriptions. |

## Reading

Strong readers enjoy reading by shifting from information gathering to a reading-for-learning approach (Apple et al., 2013). The performance requires limiting time to aggressively challenge themselves as learners to maximize learning within this time constraint. The reader motivates their reading for learning performance by doing a quick pre-reading that includes identifying their purpose, learning objectives, and expectations, putting meaning to the key words, and producing an outline of the structure of the reading (Hurd et al., 2018). Then the reader does a quick read to create five critical inquiry questions by also using the pre-reading documentation. They do a comprehensive read where the primary purpose is to produce meaning and understanding by researching and answering these established questions. Readers summarize and enhance their learning from their inquiry by generating new insights. Readers apply this learning by contextualizing their new knowledge within their life. Their reading performance concludes with an assessment of how well their performance criteria were met as well as the strength of their reading performance.

**Learning Skills**   **Identifying need, Recording, Scanning, Inquiry, Summarizing**

## Generalizing

### Generalizing

Learners who effectively generalize knowledge know how to construct full understanding before applying knowledge. Once they have understanding, they produce value by applying knowledge appropriately, effectively, and efficiently to a new context by knowing when to use it, especially in learning. These learners are very disciplined in using a step-by-step process to verify each level of learning before progressing to the next level. They track their level of learning using Bloom's Taxonomy (Bobrowski, 2007) to validate each stage of knowledge development. For example, before generalizing their knowledge, they validate that they have reached level two knowledge by determining if they know it well enough to teach it to someone else. They increase the value of their knowledge by contextualizing it. In this process, they choose valuable situations to progress from the familiar to a similar situation, then a different one, and finally an unfamiliar context using other people's situations (Utschig, 2019). They compare these visualized contexts to derive and build a model of the generalized situation to extract the conditions or contextual prompts that will trigger the appropriate use of this knowledge. They use contextualizing, modeling, and systematizing learning skills to derive and test a set of common principles required for applying this knowledge (Apple et al., 2002). These learners reuse their knowledge (i.e., transfer it) more frequently because they recognize conceptual prompts, properly use the common principles, and validate the value they have produced.

**Learning Skills**   **Clarifying conditions, Clarifying expectations, Identifying contextual prompts, Abstracting, Following principles**

## Elevating Learning through Critical Thinking

Learners carefully construct sequential and probing critical thinking questions (Hanson, 2007) to enhance learning performance. Effective learners build a foundation for their learning by asking directed questions posed during reading, based on their past experiences, previous learning efforts, and examples/models provided by experts. Learners use reading performance to evaluate the author's evidence and arguments to decide what to accept based upon what a learner already knows. They expand their thinking along with others and by asking convergent questions, make connections, and produce greater meaning. They seek clarity with the aid of divergent questions, they explore boundaries, test different ideas to validate that they know what they know and then test their understanding by explaining and teaching it to others and by answering their questions. They develop their mental endurance by extensive thinking, (i.e., being a thinker all the time), choosing which thinking skills to use and seeking as many situations where they productively struggle. They solidify their revelatory moments by writing to think. They contextualize their knowledge by applying it to a familiar context, then a similar context, followed by a different context and finally to an unfamiliar context to generalize their knowledge and attain working expertise (Nygren, 2007a).

**Learning Skills**   **Identifying similarities, Identifying differences, Interpreting, Being logical, Making connections**

## Writing to Think

Writing is a thinking performance (Flateby et al., 2000). Although free-writing is well accepted in rhetoric and gets the writer to start to write to think, the perception that free-writing is absence of thinking is missing the mark (Rule, 2013). It starts with creating mental prompts of what the thinker wants to think about. The thinker organizes a sequence of prompts for how they want to think through something (which organizes their thinking process). They take each prompt by itself to fully clarify their thinking by writing their understanding about that prompt by expounding on their thoughts and that of others. They connect with the next prompt by clarifying how previous thinking relates to it and this helps to expand their thinking on this new prompt. They are in the moment of thinking by writing as fast as they think. They do this by capturing in writing everything that they're thinking. As they evolve in their thinking as they write, they start to build on the underlying idea/thesis that their mind is trying to clarify and increase personal meaning. They conclude by addressing the implications of new understanding produced by their writing to think. At timed intervals, they stop to reflect on one thing that helped them to go faster and one thing that slowed them down in either thinking or writing. Before their next performance, they review their strengths and actions plans identified in their previous assessment to help improve their next performance.

**Learning Skills**  **Deconstructing, Interpreting, Being logical, Thinking tangentially, Recognizing contradictions**

## Problem Solving

Problem solvers use a systematic, methodical, and dynamic performance of applying key cognitive skills, experiences, and interdisciplinary knowledge to improve upon an unsatisfactory situation either for themselves or for others (Morgan & Williams, 2010). Problem solving occurs daily, whether professionally or personally, and starts when a problem is perceived or recognized (Apple et al., 2002). Problem solvers define a problem and expectations for acceptable solutions, identify any issues to address, and clarify any working assumptions. Problem solvers split the problem into simpler problems, solve these smaller ones (perhaps using previous solutions), and when done, integrate the smaller solutions together into complete solutions. Finally, problem solvers validate the effectiveness of solutions and think about how to reuse solutions in other situations. Finally, they share their knowledge by communicating the processes used and the solutions produced. Effective problem solvers facilitate group problem solving as seamlessly as they do with individual problems and persist to a consensus solution. Problem solvers are self-reliant, strong, and confident, enjoy challenging problems, clarify problems before solving them, and don't let temporary failure or frustrations slow them down or deter their can-do attitude.

**Learning Skills**  **Defining the problem, Identifying issues, Identifying assumptions, Reusing solutions, Testing**

## Metacognitive Reasoning

Learners gain greater perspective through metacognitive reasoning by thinking about thinking and assimilating thoughts, emotions, and behaviors to regulate their mental and emotional states. Learners become aware of the essence of their internal states, especially their thoughts and feelings, which allow them to analyze and reflect on their inner selves with greater understanding (Molenberghs et al., 2016). They use methodologies and learning skills to improve their self-awareness, regulate their emotions and behaviors, monitor and improve their thinking processes, strengthen decision making and problem solving, and reflect to develop insights into situations and themselves. Learners use the following triggers to identify opportunities to step back and reflect: when they are learning something very complex and important, when their or other peoples' reactions to social situations are abnormal, or when their gut tells them something is emotionally or physically amiss. When meaning is not produced, even when patient, learners can seek mentors who can help to clarify what is causing the current learning or life issues and use this opportunity to advance metacognitive reasoning performance (Fisher, 1998). Metacognitive learners love the value produced from their mind's ability to understand as much as possible about their minds and behaviors because this provides them with greater potential for self-regulation and personal strength.

**Learning Skills**  **Being self-aware, Introspecting, Being metacognitive, Being self-honest, Self-mentoring**

## Application

During the 2019 Process Education Conference, a workshop helping faculty take this knowledge and apply to both a program and a course led to the performance descriptions which follow in Figure 2 (Ellis & Moore, 2019). These faculty were given the components of this article: the nine-step methodology, components of a performance description, criteria that positively impact quality of a performance description, and examples of performance descriptions. We present two performance descriptions that were created during this workshop and which were intended to be used at the hosting and attending institutions to develop the area of *professional performance*.

### Application Results

These performance descriptions were created in a classroom setting with relative experts in Process Education participating and guiding the process. Even so, the descriptions are missing key components, the absence of which will make it more difficult to engage in, improve, and assess the performances described. It is hoped that this article and future workshop improvements in writing performance descriptions will help faculty to produce more effective performance descriptions for their programs and courses.

## Conclusion

It is the authors' aim to advance the conversation about what does and what does not constitute a performance. We have highlighted several activities that share some characteristics with performance and provided justification as to why, even though the activities are important, they do not constitute performances. We have created a new methodology for creating a high-quality performance description and provided both the methodology itself and several examples.

The process of creating this methodology and the included performance descriptions has led to several important insights. First, and probably most obviously, generating a high-quality performance description is difficult. It was difficult and time consuming for the relative experts in the self-growth community, and as demonstrated by the sample performance descriptions from the 2019 PE Con-

**Figure 2** Performance Descriptions Created During a Conference Workshop

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### Problem-Based Learning

"In a team setting, learners solve increasingly challenging problems that are open-ended, real-life and complex which do not have searchable or simple technical solutions. The team's solutions are assessed and evaluated at increasingly higher standards as they move through the curriculum. The students use a range of learning skills in self-assessment, information processing, delegation, learning process, and problem solving. The peer, facilitator, and self-mentoring of these learning skills development includes the use of performance measures and rubrics. The ultimate learning and growth outcomes will be measured and documented in a final solution presentation with a master rubric incorporating earlier assessments and adding a reflection to help learners to memorialize their growth experiences." (Ellis & Moore, 2019)

**Analysis:** A description of the underlying process is present. The necessary abilities of the performer are delineated. Required interdisciplinary knowledge is listed. Mindset and identity don't seem to be well defined, and there is no ranked list of the most critical learning skills required to increase performance.

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### Researching a Paper Topic

The researcher identifies topics that stimulate their own curiosity and openness. They scan the existing information landscape, engage with various resources to consider multiple perspectives, and ask questions that narrow their specific focus. They actively seek out and apply feedback on their topic from various experts. They adapt, refine or reconsider their original thoughts and topic based on this new information and ideas that challenge their existing worldviews.

**Analysis:** The underlying process is delineated. Some necessary skills are shared. We don't see evidence of what disciplinary knowledge is required. Mindset is clearly spelled out, but identity is less clear. There is no ranked list of most critical learning skills required to increase performance.

ference, proved virtually impossible for the faculty who attempted it under the time constraints of a single conference session. Second, we believe that a narrative model is a powerful way to communicate a performance description. Other ideas, such as a bulleted list, were attempted and ultimately discarded in favor of a descriptive paragraph (or two). Because these descriptions are generalizations that cover a wide series of performance analyses in different contexts and with different performers, we find that different descriptions for different levels of performance (as opposed to a multi-tiered model of inter-related performance descriptions) may not be necessary. That is, a single performance description may well be adequate for describing and assessing performances ranging from the levels of "novice" to "expert." A clear description led to greater understanding of the target performance at all levels. Third, the methodology developed enhances the efficiency, effectiveness, and quality of the written performance criteria, leading to additional benefits. For example, a thorough understanding of the performance requirements will inform the performer and increase the quality of their deliberate practice. This same understanding will help faculty, as well as others working to develop performance, in writing meaningful performance criteria, developing meaningful performance measures, and identifying learning and performance challenges that must be overcome. Finally, high-quality performance descriptions will lead to the necessary assessment and evaluation systems that will ultimately lead to further improvements in performance.

### Implications for Faculty and Students

There is an implicit agreement between learning institutions, faculty, students, and the public: the public expects institutions to create productive members of society, competent in their chosen field. Institutions and students expect faculty to be the primary drivers in this process. In order to create these competencies, students and faculty must work together. The performance description is an important tool in that process. High-quality performance descriptions will make the required work clearer, for both educator and student. We believe this will lead to better outcomes for all involved.

### Directions for Future Research

Students, on average, invest about 8,000 hours in attaining a bachelor's degree. They will split that time between the categories of *doing*, *productive work*, *deliberate practice*, and *performing*. It is unlikely that the best way to spend every moment is in performing, or any other single activity. An interesting question is, "What percent of time should a student allocate to each activity?" or, "What percentage of time should an instructor seek to guide students to devoting to each activity?" Also, "How should these percentages vary over time?" And, "As with Bloom's Taxonomy, should higher level classes have more deliberate practice and performing, whereas lower level classes concentrate on productive work and even doing?"

We have tried to make the case that performance descriptions lead to performance development, but in order to determine exactly how this process occurs, it needs to be mapped, documented, and tested in non-academic contexts as well. A performance description seems to be an excellent starting place to create curriculum, via reverse engineering. We must also ask, "At what level should performance descriptions be written?" Revisiting the basketball example, should there be a performance description for playing basketball in general? One for offence and one for defense? One for dribbling, or one specifically for the crossover dribble? These are empirical questions and definitive answers would serve the community invested in any given performance. Finally, we noted in the sections on experience, doing, and deliberate practice, that those activities shared many characteristics with performance. A careful study of the differences between the four activities and what is required to transform one into another would be likely to shed further light on the ongoing discussion of performance.

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### Self-Growth Performance

Self-Growers, who have a positive and "can do" attitude in producing their best current performance, expand this growth mindset into self-growth performance by internalizing the self-growth methodology. They have extensive grit to persist in overcoming any obstacles when taking on the risks of increasing challenges outside their comfort zone, fueled by their self-efficacy and belief in their own unlimited potential (Duckworth et al., 2007). Self-Growers use mindfulness, metacognitive reasoning, performance analysis, and ongoing assessment of past and current performances to improve their learning skills and future performances, leading to a greater quality of life. Self-Growers establish the broad criteria for living their lives to produce the qualities they seek in their lives. They have developed and are committed to their life vision based upon their history, self-analysis, and vision of the future through identifying key life performance areas. Self-Growers produce performance analyses and performance descriptions for each of these performance areas so they can write their key performance criteria. They develop annual, monthly, and weekly self-growth goals and work towards these goals and use these daily performances for assessment. Self-Growers have designed and implement daily assessments of these performances, especially self-assessments of failures in order to transform them into successes (Apple, et al., 2018). Self-Growers continue to strengthen important professional characteristics to mitigate barriers that inhibit their personal growth rate and self-growth capability. They are passionate, driven, healthy, diligent, and open to new techniques, skills, and strategies to support their growth. They develop and use growth and self-growth plans annually to keep developing their growth and mentoring skills. They seek community, mentoring and feedback from others and use this feedback to develop their self-growth capability.

**Learning Skills**  **Updating life vision, Setting growth goals, Believing in your potential, Feeling empowered, Self-challenging**

### Self-Analysis

Self-Growers seek and enjoy self-actualization by increasing self-awareness through exploring and analyzing their life experiences and the implication of these experiences to understand how these experiences have impacted who they are (Mettauer, 2002). They build greater understanding of themselves: why they do what they do, the value they receive from their actions and accomplishments, and how their experiences impact the fabric of their life and the lives of others. Self-Growers compare their self-awareness to the self-awareness of others. These self-investigations, through introspection, include the role that their family, friends, communities, education and other meaningful pursuits have played and will have on their future lives and their life vision (Apple et al., 2013). From becoming cognizant of their feelings of what brings meaning and importance to their life, they are in position to guide their future decisions and actions with these clarified values and needs. From this analysis, they have determined how to progress to become a better version of themselves.

**Learning Skills**  **Introspecting, Being true to self, Trusting self, Making meaning, Recognizing patterns**

### Reflecting

Self-Growers see the cognitive, social, and affective needs and prompts for reflection in a situation (Desjarlais & Smith, 2011). They value stepping back from such situations into a peaceful environment in an unrushed, timely manner to help clarify their understanding by writing to think, blending affective, social, and cognitive learning skills. A cognitive prompt exists when the self-grower recognizes that they are confused or puzzled about how they learned or accomplished something. A social prompt occurs during social situations where their reaction or that of someone else was surprising or unexpected. An affective prompt occurs when they feel anxiety or regret a decision and they need to explore why their feelings do not align with their values. Using a structured process, they often use writing to think for critical metacognitive explorations to capture as much meaning as they can to clarify what is really going on (Leise, 2010). When metacognitive clarity is not being produced, self-growers incorporate others in the reflection process. Finally, they summarize their new learning by clarifying their most important three ideas from the reflection, capturing the answers to their questions and increasing self-growth capability.

**Learning Skills**  **Seeing prompts, Writing to reflect, Introspecting, Using divergent thinking, Being self-aware**

### Receiving Evaluative Feedback

Self-Growers confidently ask for feedback and encourage more extensive feedback by performing to the best of their ability and sharing their desire for self-growth with those from whom they elicit feedback. Furthermore, they signify openness to feedback with active listening without having negative reactions, and with positive and relaxed body language, thereby encouraging people to provide more feedback (and building trust in the people around them). They are emotionally prepared to disarm any received judgmental comments by refusing to use this feedback for self-evaluation, taking on the perspective of the provider, and transforming such feedback into assessment. Self-Growers never dwell on the weakness aspects of evaluative feedback but quickly transform these weaknesses into action plans for improvement through cognitive analysis rather than emotional reactions (Sargeant et al., 2009). Self-growers are positive, believe in their own efficacy, take on a growth mindset, and are confident of future success as they receive feedback. Self-Growers enjoy life and are more likely to realize their life vision because they use this feedback to make improvements and continue to seek further growth (Stone & Heen, 2014).

**Learning Skills**    **Being non-judgmental, Seeking feedback, Accepting feedback, Maintaining objectivity, Developing action plans**

### Self-Mentoring

Self-mentors often help themselves identify their own needs for growth and set self-growth goals by finding a life coach to help with their self-growth development. They self-challenge (i.e., push themselves outside their comfort zone) by accepting and embracing these challenging self-growth goals and opportunities outside their current capabilities, while maintaining balance in their lives. They do this even though they know that these challenging activities have a greater likelihood of failure, because they also know these failures lead to greater growth. They have developed the grit (Duckworth et al., 2007) to deal with the increased anxieties, frustrations (and sometimes anger) when current performances are not close to their desired performance quality (Morgan & Apple, 2007). They design and implement ongoing assessments to leverage each small failure to help develop their long-term self-growth and create successes from their failures (Apple & Krumsieg, 2009). As their self-mentoring process becomes stronger through the internalization of the Personal Development (Leise, 2007) and Mentoring Methodologies (Apple & Krumsieg, 2009) and the growth of mentoring skills, self-growers use significant past failures and experiences as growth opportunities. They analyze these past failures and negative life experiences, learn from them, assess, and then design action and growth plans for future life successes. These self-growers document and celebrate significant holistic increases in self-growth capability and accomplishments before moving on to the next self-mentoring challenge.

**Learning Skills**    **Self-mentoring, Self-challenging, Being metacognitive, Being self-aware, Focusing on self-improvement**

### Self-Assessing

Self-Growers, using an internalized self-assessment methodology, constantly seek improvement by setting focused and purposeful performance criteria that align with their self-growth intentions and based on a 100% effort. Self-growers have a mental "camera" which they use to capture the continuous flow of their performance. Upon completion of their performance, self-growers are honest with themselves in producing analyses that capture full SII reports: strengths and why, improvements with action plans, and lessons learned (Wasserman & Beyerlein, 2007). Self-growers are positive, growth-oriented, and non-judgmental while efficiently self-assessing and producing specific and productive action plans. Self-growers use reflection skills to consciously examine self-assessments of previous performances to leverage their action plans right before their next performance (Desjarlais & Smith, 2011). They routinely obtain assessments of their self-assessments from mentors to improve their self-assessment performance. Self-Growers choose optimal times for self-assessing when a performance is: critical, poor, superior, part of a self-growth plan, brand new, or "special".

**Learning Skills**    **Analyzing needs, Focusing on self-improvement, Accepting feedback, Self-monitoring, Interpreting feedback**

## Performance Analysis

Life is made up of a variety of performances where the most important performances will be repeated frequently during a lifetime both by ourselves as well as by others which whom we are connected. Thus, for oft repeated performances, an analysis using the theory of performance will deconstruct and clarify what is essential for producing quality by examining each performance component whether for oneself, for others or for a team (Jain, 2019). The performance analysis and its six components consist of analyzing the performer's identity, the learning skills required in the performance, the knowledge essential for the performance, the context of the performance, the personal factors of the performer, and the performer's fixed factors. Since identity is so critical to one's quality of life, self-growers emotionally determine which of their identities contribute the most to key performance areas and then contemplate which performance areas contribute most to their overall identity (Apple et al., 2013). The self-grower uses the second component of performance to analyze and identify the essential performance knowledge to clarify their learning needs. The analysis continues with the identification of critical subsets of learning skills that, if increased, would enhance performance. The self-grower analyzes the performance's context and its expectations, nuances, and variations from past performances to empathize with the performer in the current context. Self-Growers develop an understanding of how personal factors of the performer, whether themselves or others, can be addressed so that the performance is not negatively impacted. Self-Growers accept and understand that fixed factors are part of life and, although minimal in number, they are real and can be significant. This means that one's acceptance of a fixed factor doesn't limit the expectations of the quality that a life can have. With this performance analysis, the self-grower produces performance descriptions and performance criteria to help improve future performance.

**Learning Skills**   **Deconstructing, Identifying schemas, Inducing, Capturing evidence, Prioritizing role identities**

## Performing in Life

A quality of life journey towards being a lifelong learner and self-grower begins with envisioning life as a general performance, with an array of sub-performances and activities that optimizes and increases the enjoyment of life. A greater quality of life performance will produce a higher quality of life. Life performers have three self-images: their actual selves, their ideal selves (the self they would like to become), and their "ought" selves (who other people think they should be). Life performers are true to themselves, so their life performances are based on the ideal self they choose to design and create (Jain, et al., 2019). By analyzing and describing their past, current, and projected performances in life, they create life plans to direct their lives so they can realize their ideal selves. Life performers, through role-playing and daily improvisation, continually imagine the person they want to become and how they will live among those who are important to them. As their life performances unfold, they shift from playing the person they currently are to consciously playing the well-balanced and healthy person they want to become: their ideal self. Their personal growth through the development of learning skills and performance skills are transferable to different performance areas, growth opportunities and life stages. When considering the identities of their key performances, whether as a spouse, parent, child, professional or adventurer, they prioritize these roles in their life plan. As their own director, they rank, order, and balance their identities to optimize the important personal qualities of who they are and how they live day to day.

**Learning Skills**  **Updating Life Vision, Prioritizing, Maintaining balance, Prioritizing role identities, Committing to success**

## Planning

Life performers stop and think before each undertaking so they can improve their results and increase their productivity by using the Planning Methodology (Apple et al., 2013). They use their goals to develop plans to achieve shared outcomes, what they want to do and that others require them to do, by identifying the time required and its allocation within the given timeframe to produce the desired quality (Apple et al., 2013). They identify resources, detailed tasks, criteria, and the schedule with built-in contingencies needed to produce monthly, weekly and daily task lists to guarantee successful and timely completion. With newly developed plans, they prioritize all other activities in their balanced lives so they can determine which must take precedence, which must be given up temporarily, and which must become more efficient so they can achieve their planned outcomes (Arnold & Pulich, 2004). They imbed assessments to measure their progress against milestones in order to assess their productivity and make needed adjustments to reduce the time and resources to complete the effort. These efficacious life performers value their plans and their purposeful structures, accept fully the responsibilities they assume, follow these plans to the best of their ability and seek new ways to increase their productivity through more effective planning.

**Learning Skills**  **Setting goals, Planning, Being organized, Prioritizing, Managing time**

## Preparing

Life performers use the preparation methodology to analyze the external and internal expectations of each performance to determine the depth and breadth of the challenge, which includes its requirements, performance criteria, and context (Apple et al., 2013). They identify the key performance issues and develop strategies to mitigate the impact that these issues could have on their performance (Hays, 2017). They do deliberate practice until these performance issues are resolved and then rehearse their performance as often as necessary to simulate as closely as possible the actual performance, so they are emotionally ready for the real performance. After even strong performances, they assess their performances, including the role preparation played in their performance, often using a performance coach to keep improving preparation and performance. These performers constantly are on top of their performance in mind and body by being fully prepared, taking personal relaxation time to ready their psychological mindset, and thus enjoy the challenge of performing.

**Learning Skills**  **Clarifying conditions, Clarifying expectations, Being prepared, Planning, Being organized**

## Performing Publicly

Life performers enjoy the excitement and challenge of performing – the energy, the synergy and high expectations, especially when the stakes are high. They prepare for every new performance by clarifying expectations, specifying deliverables, and determining how quality is to be measured or judged. They enhance their preparation by developing a performance plan and then simulating and rehearsing a performance until they reach an acceptable level of readiness, without over rehearsing. They seek assessment feedback on this deliberate practice to increase their readiness by leveraging feedback's strengths, improvements and insights. They also emotionally, physically and psychologically ready themselves the night before a performance by stepping back from further rehearsing, spend time relaxing, getting a full night sleep and eating well. Minutes before the performance, they review the targeted quality outcomes, scan their performance plan, visualize the positive performance rehearsed, engage in a quick warm up and finally prepare the body for presentation to the audience. During the performance, they have presence, strong command and exude confidence, are in the moment, mentally sharp, emotional in tune, socially connected and are meta-cognitively aware of how they are producing their quality results. At the end of each performance, public performers self-assess their performance and additionally seek and incorporate feedback to improve future performances to produce the desired applause and impact that change lives. Their improvement plan to become well-known is enhanced by the study of great performers in the field, taking on greater challenges, and using world-class performance coaches.

**Learning Skills**  **Practicing deliberately, Being fully engaged, Owning performance, Being prepared, Being organized.**

## Communicating

Life performers have internalized the Communication Methodology (Apple et al., 2013) to effectively communicate daily whether in relating, teaming, conversing informally, or making formal presentations to larger groups (Greene & Burleson, 2003). They value others by actively listening, using positive body language, checking perceptions through rephrasing, complimenting good ideas, and seeking the meaning behind what others are saying and why they are saying it. Life performers enjoy initiating meaningful conversations leading to richer lives by asking questions, seeking contributions, soliciting interest, challenging ideas, bringing in related topics, synergizing ideas, and ensuring the capture of important conclusions. Within formal settings, life performers build credibility through presence, meeting the needs of the audience and producing valuable meaning to compel an audience to hear and act upon a delivered message. They use these communication skills to connect quickly, meaningfully, and convincingly with others when leading, building relationships, learning, or collaborating to keep people informed and highly engaged.

**Learning Skills**  **Active listening, Identifying key ideas, Articulating an idea, Building credibility, Storytelling**

## Teaming

Team players enjoy the interdependence and synergy involved in setting shared goals and targeting a set of outcomes that are meaningful and significant to all team members. The individuals enjoy the team building process of forming, norming, storming and performing (Tuckman, 1965) by using the Teamwork Methodology (Apple et al., 2013). These team players are collaborative, respectful, supportive, engage others and help each other to grow (Apple et al., 2013). Team players value each individual members' strengths, skills, and perspectives. Team players enjoy producing results far beyond those that can be attained through their collective individual efforts by leveraging each other's ideas. They are responsible and willing to be accountable to others, effectively communicate with others, are inclusive decision makers, and meet the needs of others while taking care of themselves. Team players are willing to play their roles and let others play their roles while supporting them by playing their role in a synergistic way (Driskell et al., 2017).

**Learning Skills**  **Trusting, Committing to others, Collaborating, Performing in a role, Challenging groupthink**

### Building Healthy Relationships

Life performers develop social skills to realize the importance of being open to people. By sharing life's journey, they expand life's enjoyment and richness. A stronger ability to connect mentally, emotionally, and physically helps increase the quality of relationships. These life performers understand their family dynamics and have built a personal relationship with each family member, which in turn supports the overall family. Friendships are critical to them and developing these meaningful relationships are an important part of their lives. Whether family, friends, or acquaintances, life performers value helping others, respect others' boundaries and self-determination, and begin relationships with intellectual humility and no preconceived judgments. They are honest, practical, use common sense, act in the best interest of others by knowing their needs and doing the right thing, and helping others to become better versions of who they want to become (Hintze et al., 2017). Life performers have developed strong networks and support groups that are supportive of them becoming the best version of themselves, especially in difficult times. They are ready and willing to reciprocate when they discover the needs of others. They understand the significance of a life partner and, daily, seek to show unconditional love in novel ways. They value others for who they are and are supportive of who others want to become.

**Learning Skills**  **Befriending, Committing to others, Trusting, Comforting, Showing Gratitude**

### Managing Finances

Life performers have a healthy attitude towards money by relegating it to being only one of many contributors in their decision making and life pursuits. They develop a balance between short-term need and long-term effective investment strategies, thereby balancing the relationships among their thoughtful, consensus budgets, long-term savings and investment, and life choices regarding future earnings. Life performers are intrinsically motivated and don't use money and the accumulation of material objects as a measure of self-worth. They stay within their budgets without sacrificing their health concerns, showing self-constraint, and enjoy what money offers them without obsessing about what they have or do not have. Life performers think about and figure out ways to acquire critical resources like college education, a home, contingencies for life setbacks, and retirement resources by carefully saving and investing as well as increasing their financial savvy.

**Learning Skills**  **Managing finances, Using resources effectively, Being responsible, Being self-disciplined, Planning**

### Taking Care of Yourself

Since life is not a sprint but a series of marathons, life performers are committed for the long-haul. They build an inner ability to start each new race in full health by holistically taking care of themselves mentally, emotionally, socially, physically, and spiritually. They know their bodies and personal needs and have developed the strength, stamina, and wellness to address these self-care and self-discipline requirements. They optimize sleep, nourishment, breaks, and exercise so they maintain balance in their life. They address unmet needs and, when overwhelmed, they ask for help. They consciously enjoy wellness, strengthening and renewing their body, spirit, and inner self to address the challenges of the external world, without losing any of their vitality.

**Learning Skills**  **Maintaining balance, Recognizing unmet needs, Managing daily stressors, Renewing, Staying healthy**