

EFFICIENCY IN THE BUSINESS OFFICE

Performance Standard 15D.I

Observe a group of working people and make recommendations for improving productivity accordingly:

- *Knowledge*: recommend ways that productivity can be increased in a business setting.
- *Reasoning*: analyze the recommendations to show a rationale based on the concept of productivity.
- *Communication*: make written recommendations that are well organized, well focused and well detailed; express all ideas in a way that provides evidence of knowledge and reasoning processes.

Procedures

1. ***In order to understand trade as an exchange of goods or services (15D)***, provide students with sufficient learning opportunities to develop the following skill:
 - Identify ways in which the productivity of labor can be increased.

Efficiency and productivity are keys to all business operations. Because of this, business students should be aware of any ways where productivity or efficiency could be improved. Many companies offer monetary awards that reinforce efficiency. Therefore, business students need to know methods businesses use to improve productivity. This assessment aligns with Illinois Workplace Skills J2 (Demonstrating Work Ethics and Behavior/Practice cost effectiveness), J3 (Demonstrating Work Ethics and Behavior/Practice time management) and J9 (Demonstrating Work Ethics and Behavior/Identify the value of maintaining regular attendance).
2. Have business office students review and discuss the assessment task and how the rubric will be used to evaluate their work.
3. Have students discuss raising productivity on the job by recommending ways the work of the employees or students could be used more efficiently. Students may be grouped together for discussion, if reasonable methods for individual accountability are used. Students are offered options of situations to observe (possibly videotape) and make suggestions for improving productivity:
 - a. Business students would observe the workflow in a business location where the flow of work could be studied (e.g., the check processing area of a local bank; an insurance claims office; a credit card payment center; a corporate filing department; the mail processing center at a post office, large business or government office; the business office in a manufacturing plant).
 - b. Students could observe at their place of employment and/or coop experience.
 - c. As an alternative, the instructor could set up a model office in the classroom and have the students evaluate the productivity of the established work flow.
 - d. Students could observe, over a period of time, the school office operations.
4. Based on previous observations, students make recommendations with the following guidelines:
 - a. No recommendation may suggest adding employees.
 - b. No recommendation may cut out any particular work activity though changes in methodology and/or equipment may be suggested.
 - c. If a recommendation calls for more money to be spent at first, the recommendation must suggest how that spending will save money in the long run.
 - d. Recommendations may not include names of individuals or make reference to work habits of particular individuals.
 - e. Recommendations may not rely on motivating employees to work harder or beyond the regular workday, though additional training or a change in the time of day people work may be suggested.
5. Have students individually make a written recommendation (Optional - video tape), which should include a rationale for each suggestion and be presented in a way as to encourage its acceptance.
6. Evaluate each student's work using the Social Science Rubric as follows, and add the scores to determine the performance level:
 - *Knowledge*: The identification of items in the recommendations has a reasonable chance of improving productivity and is accurate and complete.
 - *Reasoning*: The analysis in the recommendations should show a rationale and an understanding of the concept of productivity.
 - *Communication*: The recommendations are well organized, well focused and well detailed; the knowledge and reasoning were completely and effectively communicated.

Examples of Student Work

- [Meets](#)
- [Exceeds](#)

Time Requirements

- One period to make recommendations
- Other class or research time will be needed

Resources

- Textbook or other sources of information on improving productivity
- Teacher developed guidelines for appropriate observations
- Social Science Rubric

SOCIAL SCIENCE RUBRIC

NAME _____ DATE _____

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exceeds standard (total points 11 - 12)
<input type="checkbox"/> Meets standard (total points 8 - 10) | <input type="checkbox"/> Approaches standard (total points 5 - 7)
<input type="checkbox"/> Begins standard or absent (total points 1 - 4) |
|---|--|

	Knowledge of evidence from the social sciences: facts/supporting details; themes/issues; and concepts/ideas	Reasoning: Analysis, evaluation and synthesis of evidence	Communication: Demonstrates knowledge and reasoning through oral, written, visual, dramatic or mixed media presentation
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key concepts/themes/issues/ideas are thoroughly identified, defined and described. • Significant facts/supporting details are included and accurately described. • Has little or no factual inaccuracies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies and logically organizes almost all relevant evidence. • Uses appropriate and comprehensive critical thinking skills and habits of mind to analyze, evaluate and synthesize evidence. • Reaches informed conclusions based on the evidence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost all ideas in the presentation are expressed in a way that provides evidence of the student's knowledge and reasoning processes. • The presentation is well focused with a well-defined thesis. • Presentation shows substantial evidence of organization. • Presentation shows attention to the details of specific performance conventions.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key concepts/themes/issues/ideas are identified, defined and described. • Facts/supporting details are included. • May have a major factual inaccuracy, but most information is correct. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies and organizes most of the relevant evidence. • Uses partial critical thinking skills and habits of mind to analyze, evaluate and synthesize evidence. • Reaches informed conclusions based on the evidence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most ideas in the presentation are expressed in a way that provides evidence of the student's knowledge and reasoning processes. • The presentation demonstrates a focus and thesis with several narrative gaps. • Presentation demonstrates adequate evidence of organization. • Presentation has mistakes in attention to the details of specific performance conventions.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some key concepts/themes/issues/ideas are identified, defined and described. • Some facts/supporting details are included. • Has some correct and some incorrect information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies some relevant evidence and omits most of the other evidence. • Uses unclear, inappropriate or incomplete critical thinking skills and habits of mind to analyze, evaluate and synthesize evidence. • Reaches incomplete or inaccurate conclusions based on the evidence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some ideas in the presentation are expressed in a way that provides evidence of the student's knowledge and reasoning processes. • The presentation demonstrates an inadequate focus and thesis. • Presentation demonstrates inadequate evidence of organization. • Presentation has insufficient attention to the details of specific performance conventions.
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Few or no key concepts/themes/issues/ideas are identified, defined and described. • Few or no facts/supporting details are included. • Information is largely inaccurate, absent or irrelevant. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important evidence relevant to the problem is not identified. • Critical thinking skills and habits of mind are absent. • Conclusions are lacking, absent or unclear. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expression of almost all ideas in the presentation is unclear. • The presentation demonstrates little focus and lacks a thesis. • Presentation demonstrates little or no evidence of organization. • Presentation has multiple mistakes in attention to the details of specific performance conventions.
Score			