Creating Job Aids

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Defined: it’s an aid that a worker can use on the job to help do the job.

Job aids can be used when:

- A simple job is performed infrequently.
- A job has a series of detailed steps that must be performed.
- A person has had training but the job is somewhat complex, requiring help to remember what to do.

A review of literature found categorization of job aids into three kinds.
Procedural job aids tell and show actions, order and results.

Effective procedural job aids:
- Answer the question how and when;
- Emphasize actions by highlighting verbs;
- Present actions as steps, in order.

Typical informing job aids:
- Diagram showing how to change a tire, step by step
- NASIS or ArcGIS "Cook Books", step by step procedures
- Checklist for progressive correlation
- Algorithms (yeh, really)

Job aids for informing are used as references in our daily lives.

Effective informational job aids:
- Make data useful;
- Answer questions about how, what, which, or where;
- Are organized by the user's frame of reference, not by the order in which actions must take place.

Typical informing job aids:
- Phone book
- NSSH
- SSM
- Technical Notes
- Geomorphic Description System
Job aids for coaching provide expert viewpoints and key information to allow individuals to perform better.

Job aids to support decision making and coaching:
- Include perspectives,
- Contain information about how to think about a topic,
- Prompts the user about thoughts or ideas,
- Help individuals form mental models.

Typical coaching job aids:
- Travel guides
- Training the Trainer text books
- Conversations with Guy Smith
- Decision tree for paralithic/nonparalithic materials

The following steps apply mainly to procedural job aids.

If the background information is important, handle it through other means of training. The job aid should only contain the **what** of the job.

An individual can create it on the fly or have somebody else capture and create it as the job is being done.
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It doesn’t need to be professional. Unless, it will be passed on for others to use with other employees. Then, somebody can take the responsibility to make it more professional if it is called for.

Use action verbs.

Highlight important information.

If using a table, use extra columns for:
- Sub-steps
- Examples
- Additional notes

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Pictures may make it easier to understand a step or steps or the whole task. But, don’t put in any more detail than is necessary. Use additional pictures or diagrams to keep each subtask shown as simple as possible. Using callout boxes may be useful.

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Revise it if the worker is not able to perform successfully from the job aid. Keep doing this until it is ready.

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Use *if and then*.

Two or more *ifs* can lead to one *then*.

An *if* should never lead directly to 2 or more *thens*. 

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Search using ‘job aids’ to find sites with more information and examples.

http://www.google.com/

Don’t think that you are the only people doing a task. It’s a good bet that somebody else would benefit from the same job aid. Share it through the National Soil Survey Center Job Aid site on the soils website. Contact the Training Coordinator, NSSC.