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# SAS<sup>®</sup> GLOBAL FORUM 2020

MARCH 29 - APRIL 1  
WASHINGTON, DC



USERS PROGRAM

Smith, Kelly D.

Sr. Research Analyst, Central Piedmont Community College



Kelly D. Smith

## Abstract

Benefits

SDPD Cycle

Using Cycle

12 PD Tips

Conclusion

One of the many tasks managers face is professional development (PD) of employees. Professional development matters because it can improve retention, create a promotion pipeline, and decrease overall company expenses. However, determining appropriate PD for SAS<sup>®</sup> professionals is especially difficult due to their diverse backgrounds and skill levels.

At SAS<sup>®</sup> Global Forum 2019, the Self-Determined Professional Development Cycle (SDPDC) was presented as a method for SAS professionals to work through their current skills, identify desired learning, select an appropriate learning option, and evaluate their learning experience. Managers can also use the SDPDC to craft personalized development plans for their employees. This presentation shows managers how to adapt the SDPDC to maximize employees' potential and enhance company success.

Please use the headings above to navigate through the different sections of the poster

# MANAGERS: PLANNING EMPLOYEES' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Kelly D. Smith

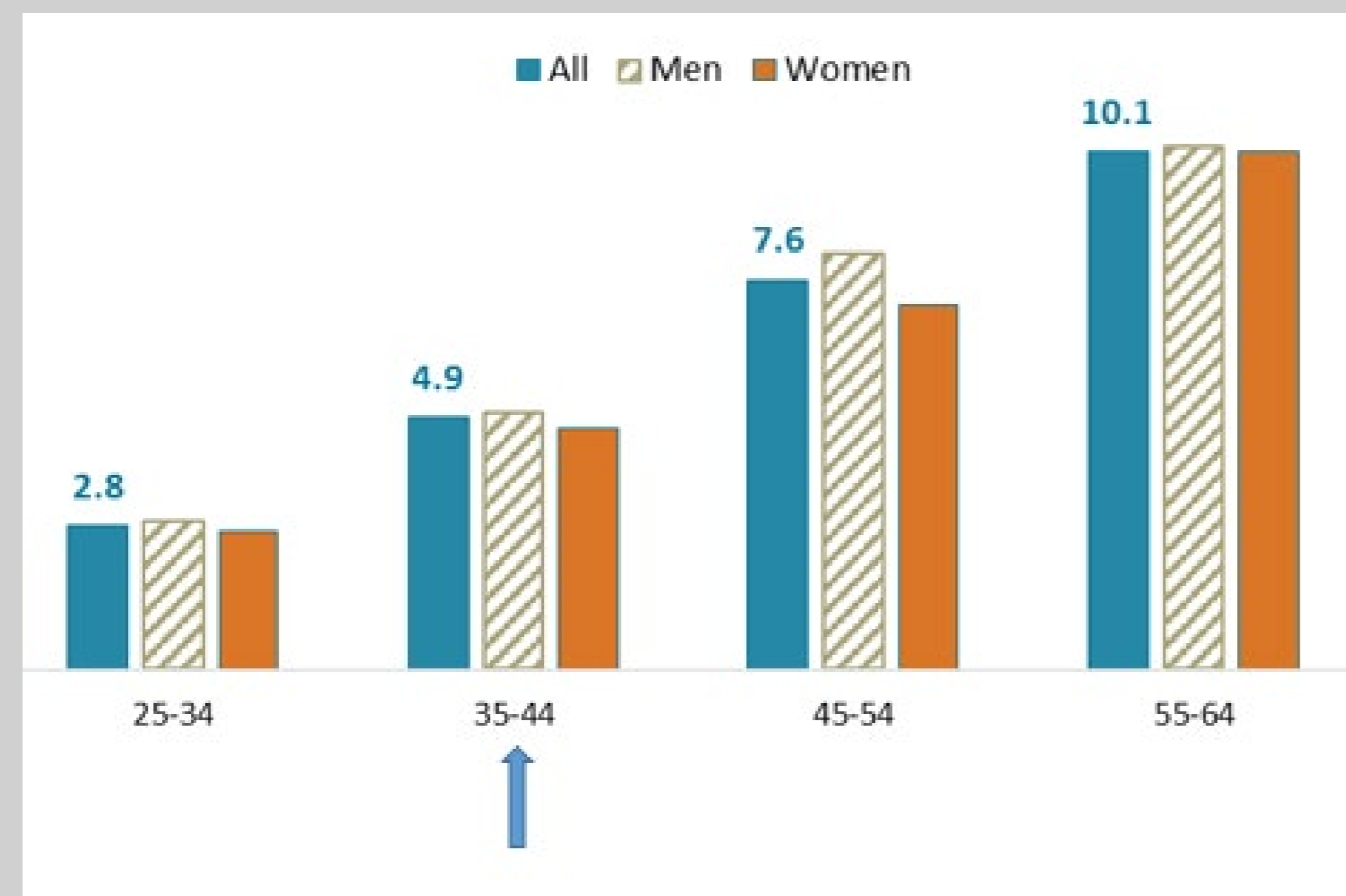
Sr. Research Analyst, Central Piedmont Community College

## Introduction

The relationship between professional development and employee retention has reached general acceptance (Biro, 2018; Cloutier, 2015); professional development benefits both the employee and the employer (Half, 2017); According to the most recent reports from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics (Figure 1), median employee tenure is 4.2 years and median age for computer programmers (a proxy for SAS coders) is 42.7 years (2018a, 2018b).

Bramblett and Broderick (2018) focused on professional development in institutional research but their thoughts provide guidance for all workplaces. Two key takeaways stand out from their work: “an educated, informed workforce, in any setting, is the key to successful practice” (p. 135) and “opportunities for professional development are key to growing a staff that is skilled, knowledgeable, and competent” (p. 142). While crafting individualized plans takes time, the time spent can be justified in terms of improved employee engagement and retention.

## Employee Tenure and Age

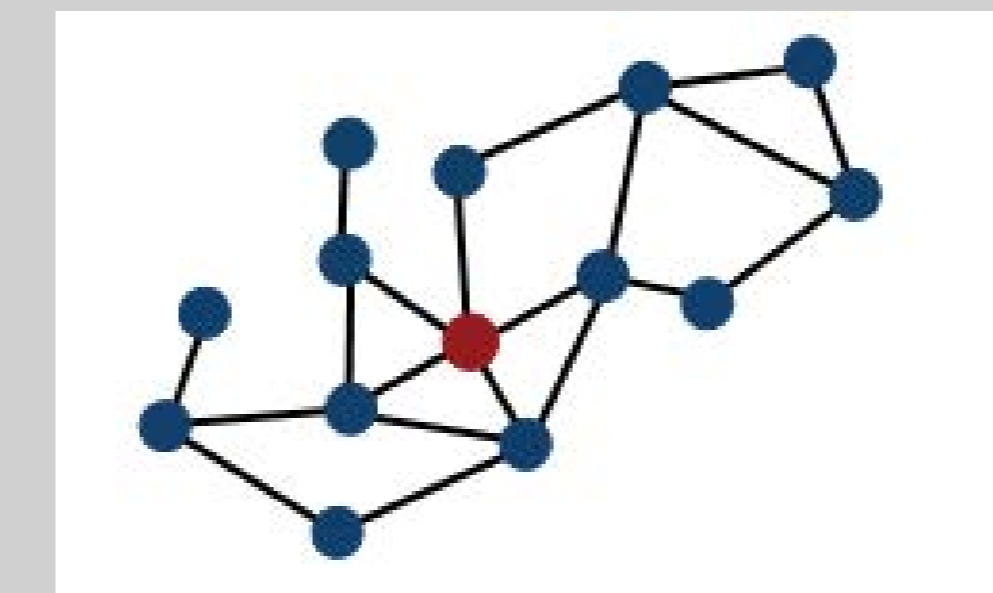


**Figure 1.** Tenure and its relationship to employee age. Arrow indicates median age group of computer programmers. (Smith, 2019b, Figure 1a)

## Benefits of Professional Development

### Employees

- ✓ Update KSAs
- ✓ Maintain interest
- ✓ Build network



(Kloosterman, 2014)

### Employer

- ✓ Retain employees
- ✓ Create promotion pipeline
- ✓ Save money

(Halvorson, 2015)

**94%** of employees would stay longer if company invested in their career development

**56%** of employees would spend more time learning if manager suggested course

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## Key Goals of Professional Development Plans

### Competency

- ✓ “acquisition of knowledge and skills”
- ✓ “skills can be repeated and knowledge retrieved”

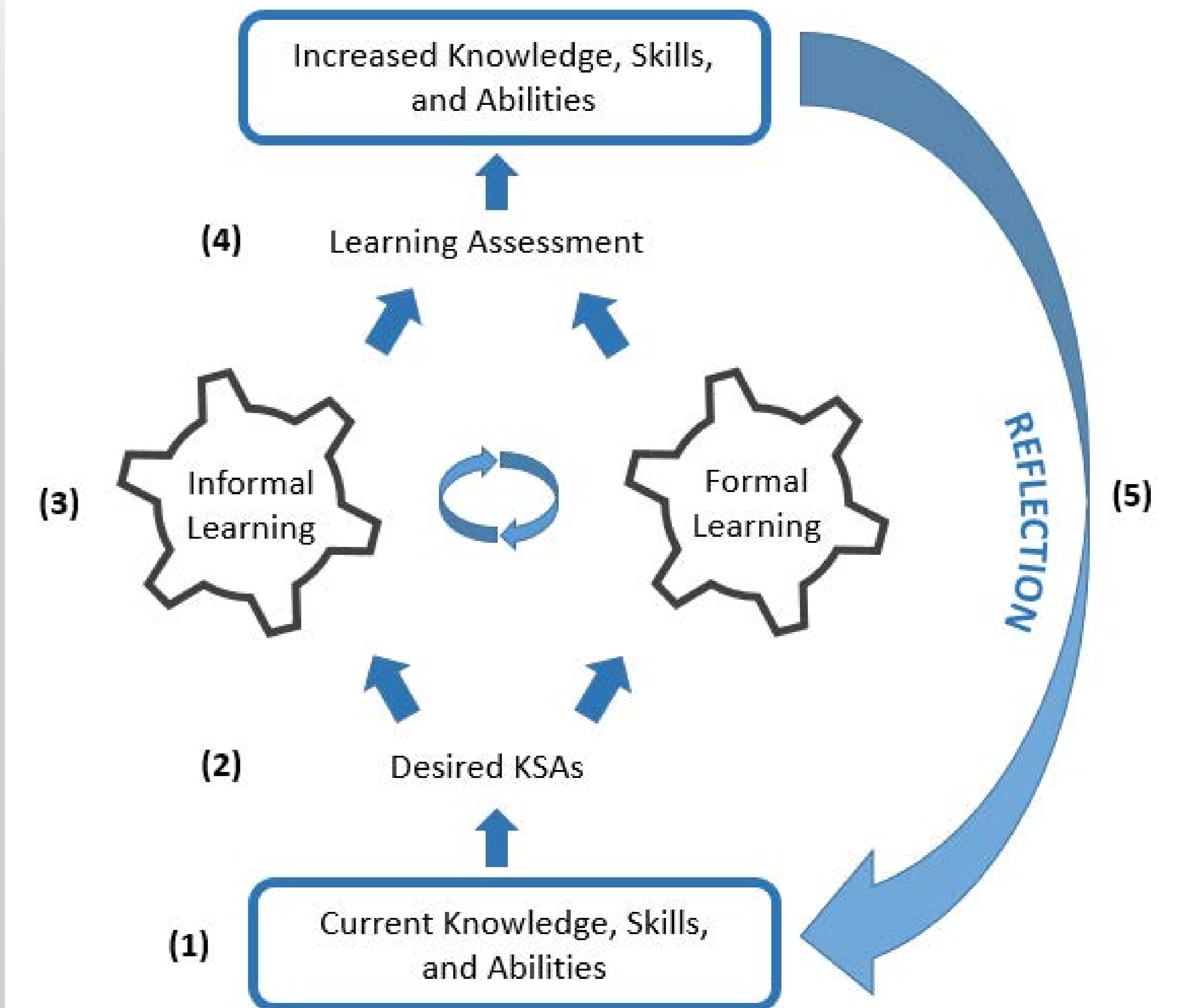
### Capability

- ✓ “skills and knowledge can be reproduced in *unfamiliar situations* [emphasis added]”

“Capability is then the extension of one’s own competence, and without competency there cannot be capability.”

(Blaschke, 2012, p. 60)

## SDPD Cycle (Smith, 2019a, Figure 1)



Stage 1 – Examine current KSAs

Stage 2 – Set learning goal(s)

Stage 3 – Research & select best learning option(s)

Stage 4 – Assess learning

Stage 5 – Active reflection

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## Assessing Current Situation and Potential Future

Stages 1 and 2 work best as two-way conversations between manager and employee. The desired outcome is a consensus between employee and manager on the next step(s) in the employee's professional development.

### Stage 1

What are the employee's current knowledge, skills, and abilities?

How do employee's actual tasks compare to official job description?

### Stage 2

What are the manager's short- and longer-term goals for employee?

What are the employee's short-and longer-term goals?

## Selecting Learning Options that Fit Goals

Stage 3 will require some research and thought by both the manager and the employee. The desired outcome is agreement on the learning opportunities to be accessed.

### Manager

What is the current workload for this team?

What is the training budget? Internal options?

### Employee

Do I learn best in face to face, hybrid, or online formats?

Is a formal or informal setting better?

## Assessing Learning

Stages 4 and 5 provide an opportunity for the employee to demonstrate their learning, and gives the manager a chance to begin assessing improved levels of competency and capability on the part of the employee.

### Stage 4 – Manager

Serve as a mentor and provide opportunities for employee to demonstrate increased competency.

### Stage 4 – Employee

Share new knowledge / skills with coworkers.

Consider reworking a previous task with new skills to demonstrate competency.

### Stage 5 - Manager

Is there evidence of increased competency and capability?

Are there any changes to future expectations?

### Stage 5 – Employee

Was my learning experience successful?

Have short or long term goals changed as a result of this learning experience?

### Final Outcome

The cycle returns to Stage 1 as manager and employee reassess skills, knowledge, and abilities.

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## 12 Tips for Professional Development

Managers can encourage employees by setting a good example. Employees are more likely to follow through if they see managers incorporating these simple steps in their own professional development process.

Make learning a recurring appointment in your calendar (try starting with 30 minutes twice a week).  
Be accountable to yourself, to a peer, or to your manager.  
Your plan should include goals and a timeframe for each.



Explore [www.lexjansen.com](http://www.lexjansen.com) and [www.sas.com](http://www.sas.com) for learning opportunities.  
Try out what you learn. Don't make learning a one-time event.  
Share what you learn. Join a SAS community, put in proposals for SAS conferences.  
Create a professional library of useful reference materials.

Annotate your code. Explain why you chose one SAS function over another.  
Explore code written by others; ask questions about their approach and coding choices.  
Save snippets of useful code for later use. Be sure to annotate the code.  
Explore new platforms; if needed; download University Edition.



\*\*\* Think outside your current role. Explore other professional fields or look for volunteer opportunities. \*\*\*

(images from [www.pexels.com](http://www.pexels.com))

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## CONCLUSION

The SDPD Cycle was originally designed to help employees manage their own professional development, but supervisors can adapt the framework to create individualized plans for their employees. Since SAS coders come to the field from a variety of backgrounds, individualized plans are key to their successful development.

Thoughtful application of the SDPD Cycle benefits a business's bottom line. Employees receive personalized growth plans: managers can improve employee engagement and establish a promotion pipeline: the business benefits with improved employee productivity and retention.

## References

All references and some text from:

Smith, K. D. (2019a, April). *New to SAS®? Helpful hints for developing your own professional development plan.*  
Paper presented at the SAS Global Forum 2019, Houston, Texas.

Smith, K. D. (2019b, October). *Need to develop your employees' SAS Skills? A step by step framework.*  
Paper presented at the SouthEast SAS Users Group Conference 2019, Williamsburg, Virginia.

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The background of the banner is a scenic view of the Washington Monument at dusk, reflected in the water of the Tidal Basin. The sky is a mix of blue, purple, and orange. In the foreground, there are cherry blossom trees with pink and white flowers. A dark blue rectangular box is centered over the image, containing the event title in white and teal text.

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