



Shapes Learning Consultants

Mega-Corp
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Dear Dr. Quinn:

Here at Shapes Learning Consultants, we place great value in meta-learning or 'learning how to learn.' Meta-learning provides a solid foundation for learning and produces learners who capitalize on educational opportunities. We are pleased to offer you a meta-learning program that works synergistically with your training programs. Enclosed is a description of our design approach.

Design

We suggest a two-pronged approach for introducing meta-learning into your organization. The first phase is an intensive, in-person training program to empower your learners with strategies for successful learning. In the second phase, we will work with you to develop materials to enhance your existing training program(s).

The in-person training program will consist of two days of structured learning. On the first day, learners will be introduced to the concept of the human information processing system (HIP). Applying this concept to their individual learning processes, we will explore the sources of motivation and self-satisfaction, discuss the participant's field experience, and encourage information exchange. Lastly we'll create a learning profile for each participant so that they will better understand their strengths and weaknesses as learners.

On the second day, we will apply what was learned in day one. We will begin with an interactive review of the major concepts. Then, using the multi-stimuli approach, we will couple hands-on activities (such as role-play scenarios) with written material and discussion. Our goal is to create multiple memory connections and allow ample opportunity to rehearse newly learned material. We will highlight strategies for successful learning and promote active participation and accountability for one's learning process. There is power in understanding the learning process and applying that to learning activities.

Likewise, in order to be a successful learner, one must understand the limitations of their own "cognitive information processing system." Therefore, throughout our training, we will describe the limits of the HIP system and, with the help of the learner, identify



solutions to overcome these limitations (many of these strategies are, in turn, incorporated into our training program). We will emphasize the following areas:

- **Attention.** Attention is, obviously, selective. It decreases when the content lacks meaning to the learner; when the task blends into the surrounding context; or when the task is too difficult. We will explore simple coping strategies such as using cues and practicing attention skills through personal challenges.
- **Inputting and Encoding.** Inputting information presents many challenges. For example, our ability to recognize an association is limited by disjointed content. Similarly, encoding can be corrupted in numerous ways. Strategies for dealing with these problems include: breaking down larger bits of information into smaller, more manageable, “chunks;” the use of mnemonics and imagery.
- **Retrieval.** The failure to access information in our memory stores can be very frustrating to a learner. Possible solutions include note taking, presenting new concepts for memorizing material, and maintaining similar atmospheres between learning and testing situations.

In the second phase, we will work with you to incorporate meta-learning into your training material. For example, we will pair text with imagery (e.g. flowcharts) and expand the number and or use standard cues to help draw the learner’s attention to critical information. In addition we will create a self-paced, interactive version of the meta-learning material. Ideally, the module will be available directly from your online training programs. This way, the learner has instant access to the online material and can customize the module to their needs. For example, an employee in finance might need assistance in memorizing financial laws whereas service providers might benefit from repeating or rehearsing of information. We will also work with you to ensure that all future training material reflects the strategies suggested by meta-learning.

Evaluation and Modifications

It takes time and practice to fully incorporate meta-learning strategies into one’s learning process. Therefore, we expect only moderate improvements in learning in the short term and in the long-term. To measure this, we will test participants at the outset and again at the close of the 2-day training course. We will be looking for use of meta-learning skills to solve problems, memorize and encode data, and evaluate learned information. In the long-term (3-6 months), we will compare the scores from your existing training programs. If the meta-learning training is successful, we expect to see improvement in areas of retention, problem solving, and decoding. As a final step, we will survey



participants to determine which learning strategies they are still employing and why they stopped using others.

If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Thank you,

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References

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