Brain Gain: Learning Design for Every Mind

- Waste Reduction: Engaging Managers to Improve Performance
- The New World: Developing Leaders Around the Globe

The New Era of Mobile Learning
From Where I Sit
By Doug Harward
Sitcoms aside, outsourcing is no laughing matter: It’s a strategy that helps build business. What’s funny about that?

At the Editor’s Desk
This issue’s guest editor, Barbara Jordan, knows about “crunch time.” It’s a reality in training, but it also creates incredible energy.

Winning Organizations Through People
By Dr. Michael O’Connor
Performance is the ultimate outcome of workforce development. Performance learning definitely puts you on the road to results.

Learning Technologies
By Rick J. Crowley
Learning today draws on a variety of tools to best engage learners. Voice-over Powerpoint and searchable video can be great solutions.

Performance & Productivity
By Charles Jennings
People work in new ways these days, and they learn that way too. Developing core skills can only help make all learning more valuable.

Closing Arguments
By Tim Sosbe
Good customer services starts with good training, but it’s all about the attitude. No matter where you reside on the org chart, training can play a part.
PERFORMANCE LEARNING

As an executive adviser, coach, facilitator and speaker, I continue to be a participant in real-life, high-consequence situations where people either accept or reject the many opportunities each of has to learn. Working recently with a company to help it shape its strategic business development, I heard a couple of widely different comments about the value of the process. So what explains these very different and common reactions to the daily learning opportunities in our lives?

What Is ‘Performance Learning’?

Performance learning is intended to improve our individual or collective performance. It has a clear intention to achieve better results—whether in the direction of strengthening productivity or satisfaction. As such, “performance learners” seek forward movement, while “non-learners” are comfortable with the current state (whether their own or their organization’s). I have found it easy to identify performance learners by their preference to stretch versus remaining comfortable.

Performance learning involves an open, searching approach. Its essence is a positive emotional state that increases the likelihood of cognitive gains (new knowledge, skills, insights, attitudes, practices) by contrast with the inverse personal dynamics that self-limit the performance and, ultimately, both the effectiveness and success of their non-learner counterparts.

Performance learners truly get it! They have learned through the daily school of life that focusing only on their existing strengths yields decreasing benefits. Instead, they capitalize on both their natural and previously developed strengths to broaden and deepen their tool kit in the direction required to successfully meet (and often exceed) continually changing expectations. I continue to be reminded that the single most common cause for those executive non-learners who eventually self-destruct is holding on to the outdated, irrational belief that success in the past will continue in the future.

How Do We Learn to Perform?

At this point, you are probably asking this question—especially if you are a performance learner. How people learn—with or without the aid of technology, tools or techniques—was validated long ago. The learning process follows the same sequence, whether it involves a key job result area or task, a work process, selling or servicing, managing, or making strategic decisions. It begins with Awareness, which is followed by Acceptance. In turn, this state of openness contributes to further Understanding. And, this is strengthened through practice of such Applications and their subsequent refinement by ongoing fine-tuning Analysis. Finally, this new performance learning becomes Integrated into who we are as a dynamically evolving, newer and better contributor to our own lives and that of others.

Dr. Michael O’Connor is a recognized thought leader, executive coach and founder of Life Associates, Inc. Michael is the co-author of “The Platinum Rule,” “People Smart” and “Customer Smart Selling & Service.” E-mail Michael at droconnor@lifeassociatesinc.com.