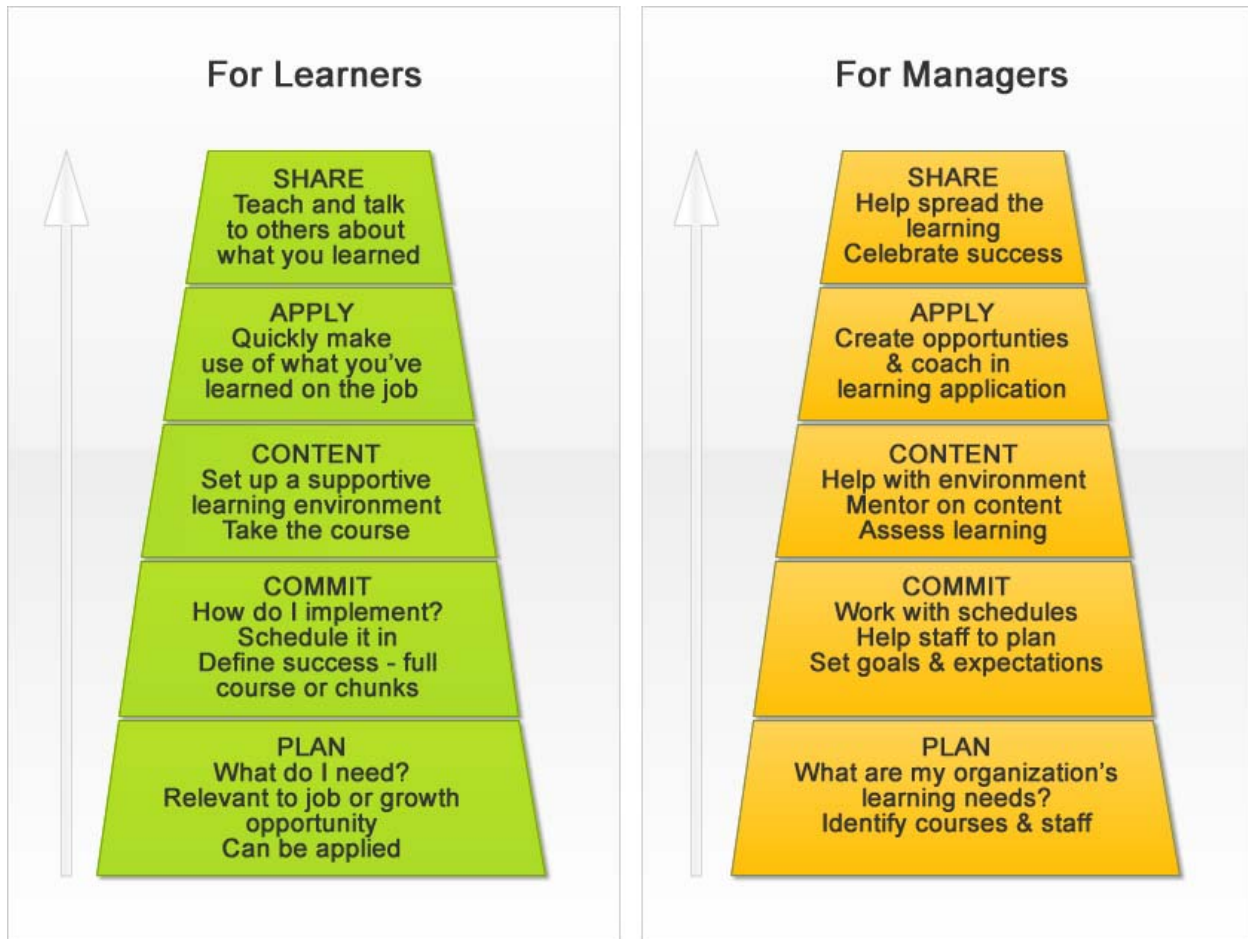


Strategies for Online Learning Success

Tips for Online, Self-Directed Learning



FOR LEARNERS

Plan

- What skills do I need?
- Am I interested in learning something new that can support my workplace?
- What courses are available that can address these needs or possibilities?
- Does my supervisor support me in taking a course to address these needs or possibilities?

Commit

- Make a commitment to take a specific course that meets your needs.
- Am I taking the course at the right time? Will I be able to apply what I learn right away?
- Work with your supervisor to schedule uninterrupted time into your workday/week to take the course, including any study or practice time. Don't assume you'll "make the time" if you don't schedule it in! And interruptions will hinder learning.
- Plan not to allow too much time to pass between learning sessions – you don't want to forget what you've previously learned if you take too much time in between.
- Get clear on your definition of success – is it completion of the course? Short chunks to meet a particular defined need? Discuss this with your supervisor.

Content

- Find out about any technical requirements to take the course - headphones, speakers, software, plugins. Plan for IT department support if needed.
- When you're working on the course, post a sign in your work area indicating what you're doing and when you'll be available.
- Turn off phones, IM, and email alerts, and by remove other distractions from your desk.
- Think about pacing and taking breaks, depending on your individual needs.

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Tips for Online, Self-Directed Learning

Apply

- Find means to apply what you're learning to your work as soon as possible. Make a list of possible applications as you're taking the course.

Share

- Give a brown-bag on the course content.
- Create a tip sheet for your colleagues on the course content.
- Compile a summary report that can be emailed to colleagues on the course.
- Explore other resources on the topic that can also be shared with staff through the above means.

FOR Managers

Plan

- What are the learning needs of my staff?
- What areas within my organization need development, support or staffing?
- Are there new areas within which I want the organization to grow?
- What courses are available that can address these needs or possibilities? Think about how an online "just in time" learning initiative, without need for travel, can benefit your organization.

Commit

- Work with staff to select specific courses that meet needs.
- If online learning is new to your organization, select staff who are most comfortable in an online environment to start your initiative.
- Make sure staff is taking courses at the point of need. If a new software version is rolling out in 6 months, taking a course now isn't the appropriate time.
- Work with staff to schedule uninterrupted time to take the course – this may mean providing an alternative work space. If appropriate, let other staff know that lack of interruption is important.
- Talk to staff about expectations and success – what are goals and objectives for the course? Will you know if they've been met? Consider feedback, reflection or other means for accountability and enhancement of learning. In online learning, responsibility is shifted from instructor to learner – be willing to support your staff with this responsibility.

Content

- Support staff with any technical requirements. Communicate with IT about any larger support needs resulting from online learning initiatives.
- Provide support and mentoring for staff on course content.
- Think about whether and how you'll track learners – what staff has taken what course and completed what assessment – especially if this will apply to performance evaluation.
- Implement evaluations, reflection pieces or other approaches to assess learning. Provide timely, thoughtful feedback on these assessments.

Apply

- Support staff in applying what they've learned to their work. Coach them in this process.

Share

- Facilitate the process of staff sharing what they've learned in online courses. Use this opportunity to create a culture of learning in your organization.
- Celebrate success through certificates or other forms of recognition.