

# Continual Learning

## Competency Development Activities

### Competency Definition

Grasps the essence of new information; masters new technical and business knowledge; recognizes own strengths and weaknesses; pursues self-development; seeks feedback from others and opportunities to master new knowledge.

### Developmental Activity Levels

#### All (A)

*Applies to all competency levels*

#### Beginner-Basic Knowledge (B)

*A person at the Beginner-Basic Knowledge level has limited experience applying the competency. He/she applies general knowledge in common situations but has limited practical experience in applying the competency in a work environment presenting more complex situations.*

#### Mid-level (M)

*A person with mid-level proficiency has applied the competency repeatedly and successfully in the performance of his/her job but still has much to learn about the advanced aspects or behaviors associated with the competency. A person at this level can usually apply the competency on his/her own.*

#### High (H)

A person at the High level has extensive knowledge of and experience with this competency and can apply the competency exceptionally well on the job without assistance. At this level one is an expert and has enough experience to teach the competency to others.

### Articles, Books, and Websites

A David B. Peterson and Mary Dee Hicks, Development First: Strategies for Self-Development, Personnel Decisions International, August, 1996.

This book deals with practical approaches to individual and team development within the changing corporate environment. Its five concise development strategies enable users to plan and execute their own development in a busy, demanding world. No matter what your job is, you feel pressures to work faster, smarter, and better. To stay competitive, you have to develop new capabilities to do more with less and stay abreast of technology. If you don't continually improve these capabilities, you will fall behind. Development is not optional.

A Davis, James R. and Davis, Adelaide B., Managing Your Own Learning, Berrett-Koehler

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Publishing, March 2000.

In today's rapidly changing workplace, learning is more important than ever before. But many people don't understand how learning takes place and how to manage the process. This book shows readers how to analyze their previous learning, design an action plan for future learning, expand their educational opportunities, and use libraries and the Internet effectively in order to become a proactive and perpetual learner.

#### Activities

**B** Create pictures about things you want to learn. Many people learn better by seeing a picture than just reading documents. Draw diagrams. Make cartoons.

**B** Keep a list of resources that you can consult when you are learning new skills on the job. These resources might be technical manuals, web sites, or your colleagues.

**B** Set learning objectives for yourself or your work group at the beginning of every project or assignment.

**B** When learning new material, periodically ask yourself how you are doing. What concepts are you not grasping? Where could you go for more information? Follow through with other resources until you do grasp the concept.

**M** Keep a list of resources that you can consult when you are learning new skills on the job. These resources might be technical manuals, web sites, or your colleagues.

**M** Set learning objectives for yourself or your work group at the beginning of every project or assignment.

**H** Keep a list of resources that you can consult when you are learning new skills on the job. These resources might be technical manuals, web sites, or your colleagues.

**H** Read a variety of periodicals to maintain up-to-date knowledge of the transportation security field, intelligence, current events, organizational leadership, management, and other relevant subjects.

**H** Identify 2-3 areas for potential learning development and plan an on-going process for building knowledge or skills through reading, training, etc.

**H** Network with other leaders and managers inside and outside TSA in order to share best practices and learn how they are handling issues and challenges relevant to the Executive FSD positions.

**H** Analyze your career goals and the kinds of skills and expertise you are still lacking to achieve your goals. Create a list of the things that you want to learn over the next several years. Focus

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development on these areas.

**H** Search for, and take advantage of, meaningful training and development workshops being offered in your area and make an effort to attend them.

**H** Take on additional responsibilities. Get involved in a variety of experiences to maximize your development. For example, volunteer to act for another manager when he/she is out or on leave.

#### **Coaching Suggestions for Managers**

**H** Ask staff to become an expert in an area that is interesting to them, will have increased importance in the next couple years, and will add value to TSA. Ask them to read about it, take courses in it, conduct personal research, and develop original thoughts about it.

**H** Have development discussions with each of your direct staff. Identify important competency areas for their current job and the Executive FSD job. Ask them to seek feedback about their strengths and weaknesses in these areas from their peers and their direct reports. Use this guide to help them identify appropriate developmental activities and create a Career Plan. Include specific measurements of success.

**H** Ask staff to research specific issues that you and your TSA employees need to understand better. Have them learn enough about the issue to brief you and others on what they learned. Have them become the resident expert on the issue in your organization.