

LEARNING

Our approach to learning is now starting to evolve away from the notion of "on the job training", that was characteristic of medieval guilds and our Department.

Intergenerational learning will continue to have great value for us. It will help perpetuate central values, teach classic skills, transmit invaluable empirical knowledge. But carried to excess, it will tend to perpetuate the past. We risk knowing only what we already know, even if it's obsolete.

So if the traditional system alone no longer serves, what does? **We should institutionalize continuous learning as a central function of the Department.** There are at least seven good reasons to do so:

1) **Knowledge flows in both directions in the Information Age.** The younger cohorts of the Nexus generation is intimately at ease with **information technology**. Many older employees, including those at the senior levels are not, and yet IT is changing the entire environment in which DFAIT/FS fulfills its role. (The older generation should be looking to the young for learning and leadership in this area, as much as the reverse is true in many other areas.) **We must invest continuously in our IT skills to be able to capitalize on our massive investment in technology.**

2) The range and **complexity of issues** in the international domain is growing and **will continue** to do so with globalization. We need to be aware of this changing environment to be effective in it. Learning must be a constant part of professional life for every employee.

3) We will be better able to **transmit central values** than relying only on the hierarchy to do so, because that traditional method is idiosyncratic and occasional.

4) As a learning-directed institution we will be able to **offer value to the broader community** in government and the private sector and be better able to gain the benefit of the community's knowledge and networks.

5) We are increasingly competing with others who are able to offer intermediation at all levels, as experts deal with experts, companies with companies, NGO's with NGO's. **We will have to be more expert ourselves, if we are to add value in such circumstances.**

6) A culture of continuous learning will enable us to approach the **sharing of best practices** in a strategic fashion. Our craft requires and permits constant innovation. We will do this best if we remove barriers within our system, and actively encourage employees to learn from each other around the World.

7) Most important, the assured opportunity for **continuous learning is a powerful motivator** for the Nexus generation, whose expectations for mobility (voluntary or not) dictate that they possess the maximum "employability" skill sets at all times. The guarantee of continuous learning will help staff achieve **mobility inside the institution**, as well as a level of personal improvement that should be a sought-after reward for our WFF.

The Head of CFSI should be given the formal role of Chief Knowledge Officer (CKO), and be supported by Senior Management in developing and implementing a program that will require a minimum of two weeks of career relevant training per annum for every employee.