Make Your Learning Meaningful—and Memorable!
By Bobbi DePorter

What is school all about? It’s important to ask ourselves this question. Sometimes we get so caught up in the daily grind we forget that the real purpose of school is to learn. Each class may seem like another in a series of busywork and tests, and once completed we quickly forget the information and move on to the next course. With this kind of attitude we may pass our classes, even get good grades, but very little real learning takes place. Real learning has meaning. It can be a joyful, exciting moment of discovery, often sparking a sudden insight or idea. It’s useful, immediate and not easily forgotten.

If you want to get the most out of your learning, you need to find ways to make the information meaningful, which in turn makes it more memorable. At SuperCamp we suggest using WIIFM (pronounced wiffem)—what’s in it for me? Why not try it out? In your next class ask yourself the following questions:

- How does this information relate to my other classes?
- How does it relate to what I’ve learned in the past?
- How does it relate to me personally? My family? My friends?
- How can I use it in my life?

For example, learning about World War II may seem like an endless exercise in memorizing dates and locations—until you make it relevant. Ask yourself some questions like the following:

- Will these locations have more meaning if I relate them to what I’ve learned in geography?
- What else do I know about these places?
- How did the events of World War II affect the people who lived through them?
- Where were my grandparents during the war? How did the war affect them?
- How would I have felt if I had been part of this war, either in the army or living in one of the affected areas?
- How do the events of World War II and the type of thinking they produced affect us today?
- Are similar events still occurring?
- How are they affecting the people involved?
- How do I feel about the current events?

Put learning into context and see how it fits into your life. Give it meaning. Learning can be an exciting adventure full of possibilities once you start to see the connections. If you really want to give meaning to your learning—and learn more effectively—use WIIFM!