

Self-learning is a very good strategy for career growth

Author: Kudzai Derera . October 2020

The *self-learning* world can be a little daunting. *Self-learning*, however, is crucial for us in the 21st century if we want to achieve our goals and remain important in an ever-changing world. But what is *self-learning*? *Self-learning* is defined, according to [Malcom Knowles](#), as a mechanism through which people take the initiative to diagnose their learning needs, devise learning strategies, define human and material resources for learning, and determine learning outcomes, with or without the assistance of others. This learning strategy allows the learner to take care of their learning process that is the diagnosis of learning requirements, specification of learning objectives, collection of learning strategies and assessment of learning success and results.

We are in the do-it-yourself career development era now. Organisations offer advanced training less often, this was a pattern that has been around for years. This may be because workers move positions so often that organisations do not see the benefit of investing in people who are likely to quit with job tenure now averaging around four years. A [Harvard Business Review](#) analysis shows that we are rarely rising alone and that we are best prepared as a group to learn and develop our skills. This drives the creation of like-minded networks, especially within organisations and teams. However, the desire to think for ourselves stretches well beyond just the workplace, as we pursue more meaningful pursuits in our lives.

A career is a portfolio of projects that teach you new skills, gain you a new experience, develop new strengths, develop your colleague collection, and constantly reinvent you as a brand, Business writer [Tom Peters](#) once said. The modern method of learning is *self-learning*. Not that conventional, instructional learning has been substituted, but it has been augmented and with some fantastic results. Thanks to the rise of the internet, self-directed learning has been proven to be effective, easy, and quick. Nowadays, through a quick Google search, through watching a YouTube video, and simply reading instruction manuals, you can learn how to do almost anything. The modern method of learning that equips people with abilities that are important to their everyday lives is *self-learning*. However, even for the brightest people, this can be a daunting form of learning, as it requires lots of discipline.

Advantages of self-learning

In the [International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning](#), the findings published state that the amount gained from the online classroom is much greater than in conventional lecture-based courses. Also, even the least-prepared individuals acquired knowledge just as well as those who were already qualified in the subject. If you are not sure if *self-learning* is the best learning style, here are some proven benefits of *self-learning*:

- **You develop strong problem-solving skills** - *Self-learning* allows you to recognise issues and

easily check on your own for successful solutions. This may be through friends, the internet or by discovery. Whatever the case, obstacles and hurdles do not destroy your desire to get things done, but instead, give you new opportunities at your speed and time to learn something new. Instead of having solutions brought to you, you get to know how to systematically search for solutions.

- **It is a stress-free learning process** - The *self-learning* process puts a great focus on the process rather than on the learning outcome. Also, within a certain time, there is no obligation to learn the necessary material, with the ultimate aim being the achievement of high grades. When you want to learn, you choose what you want to learn and how to learn. The net result is material internalisation, which is why self-learners appear to internalise what they learn more than those who engage in guided learning.
- **You gain other skills in the process** - You get to learn other valuable skills while studying, such as time management, self-assessment, and set your objectives. These are big skills that can be applied everywhere. In particular, individuals who are good at *self-learning* have an enhanced ability to improve other abilities, since, to learn, they also have to employ a certain set of abilities. Finally, as they learn how to stick to a schedule before they reach their goals, self-learners have a deep dedication to assignments.
- **The learning experience becomes more meaningful** - Self-driven learning derives from a personal desire to develop new skills. The desire to find more knowledge about a subject and use the information for a specific reason is motivated by it. Therefore, you have a clear objective of why you are learning and the data gained is often important, making it meaningful. Also, because you are not just learning for the sake of learning, you are inclined to look for deeper knowledge about a topic. Learning now has a target and is fun, leading.
- **Learning is now led by curiosity** - A big part of learning is to satisfy some degree of interest, and when there is interest, learning happens naturally. This, therefore, suggests that when the push comes from inside, you will be driven to learn and you will get much more information than from external sources. It becomes an adventure and each time you learn something new effectively, your skills are enhanced.
- **You get to choose your mode of learning** - When you plan to learn, YouTube videos, webinars, books or any other form of learning is at your disposal. You get to pick one that suits you best and one that you find most engaging with all these modes of learning within your scope. Only because that is what is available, you don't have to stick to one mode of learning.
- **It creates a sense of responsibility** - Self-learning compels the person to use them to make their notes and study. Within a person, an idea of obligation is constructed. They begin to feel responsible for what they do, which in turn also leads to character building. The person also becomes more attached to what he is studying and becomes interested in the healthy process of learning.
- **Easy language** - Self-learning requires attempts to read, understand, make notes and then learn them. When an individual makes his/her notes, they do so in a language that they understand. The language of the textbook is often difficult for learners to understand, so during exams, they rely on their handmade notes. This not only helps them to learn responses but also enhances their understanding.
- **Builds confidence** - The best way to raise confidence is self-learning. Self-learning satisfies the

independence of an individual. The teaching-learning method is entirely the prerogative of the individual. This gives them the ability to make choices and solve problems whenever necessary, which in turn helps to build trust and elevate the confidence of the child.

- **Score better** - Being self-taught allows an individual to score better. One where an individual is competing with himself is a healthy rivalry. Since *self-learning* helps to understand the subject matter better, during an examination it prevents one from blanking out. Individuals are better centred and they are well revised with the subject. All these factors lead to better marks being scored.

Disadvantages of self-learning

However, there some disadvantages of *self-learning*:

1. No self-discipline
2. No face-to-face interaction
3. Lack of input from trainers
4. Slow evolution
5. Good e-learning is difficult to do
6. Lack of transformational power
7. No peripheral benefits

The importance of self-learning

There is plenty of information all around us in today's digital day and age, readily accessible 24/7 from the convenience of our mobile devices. While traditional classroom-based learning that includes an on-site teacher is still valued in our modern-day learning environment, *self-learning* has also become an equally important supplementary tool since it produces wonderful results. Here are the reasons why self-learning is so important:

- **It inculcates discipline & boosts self-esteem**

Learning how to sift through an overwhelming amount of data, evaluate what is important, manage your time so that you are not too carried away and refrain from succumbing in the process to other distractions, i.e. Facebook, Instagram, games-requires a lot of discipline and self-motivation from the end of the individuals so that they do not lose sight of their main objective to learn, particularly when preparing for daunting milestones ahead in their career. Not only does building such discipline improve self-esteem, but it also proves to be very useful in other areas of life in the long run, including the workplace, where one has to be an efficient self-starter who can operate without much direct supervision.

- **It improves problem-solving**

An individual must set their own goals, figure out how to monitor progress and understand how to manage their time wisely. *Self-learning* can be a series of trial and error. *Self-learning* essentially helps

to solve an individual problem independently, without hand-holding. The student needs to be proactive at every step of the way, rather than getting everything on a silver platter. This involves adaptability and active participation.

- **It makes learning relevant**

It becomes enjoyable when an individual takes charge of the process because they are in full control. Therefore, each new learning, each discovery, each new victory feels exciting. Most significantly, learning becomes incredibly important. An individual can delve as deeply as they want in fields that genuinely ignite their interest; this creates opportunities in the process to discover their true professional calling.

- **It is a customisable experience**

The advantage of *self-learning* and online tuition is that it can take place at the exact speed that fits any individual. Also, there are so many forms of learning to choose from that an individual does not have to put up with YouTube, a tool that is not effective for them. E-books. With webinars. Workshops Online. The choices are limitless! Most importantly, *self-learning* can be tailored to fit into each individual's unique schedule – resources are available round the clock!

- **It helps one develop problem-solving skills**

You are also automatically a problem solver when you're a self-learner. This is because you will have the opportunity to do research quickly and easily and find solutions to any issue that arises in your life. There is an abundance of helpful data available to address virtually any issue you could face. And becoming a self-learner means seeking solutions by spurring yourself. By simply doing a quick online search, by asking people for support on forums, or by improving the skills you need through books and online courses, you can find solutions. You will develop trust in your ability to meet life's challenges. What is more, you will be able to support others as well.

- **It grows your self-knowledge**

Pick a new ability, such as writing, marketing, or coding, to help your career. Or by learning to sketch, brainstorm, doodle, or journal, suggest using your imagination. The whole *self-learning* process contributes to greater self-knowledge, which can be a profound experience. You will be able to focus on and accumulate valuable lessons from your life, i.e. past events and actions. Such awareness will help you to make future choices that better serve you as well. Training will contribute to personal development and a happier mentality.

- **Gives room to an individual to have multiple skills**

Specialising in a specific field has always been the formula for success. But today, this formula isn't the only way to increase your career. You may wear various hats thanks to technology and you can need to, as organisations expect individuals to perform many tasks. *Self-learning* helps you to gain many talents

that can make you stand out. The best part is that, in every area of life, you will also develop personal skills that will benefit you. Communication, leadership ability, and other skills can strengthen your relationships as well as your professional ones. Having many talents will help you become more of a leader and will open up more doors for your career advancement as well.

How to start self-learning

You are guaranteed to face several circumstances, shifting cultures, and new positions in your career or personal life that require you to adapt to them. A strategy for self-development will help you cope with the transitions and struggles that you need to be well-equipped to succeed in all aspects of your life. When it comes to personal growth, either in your work, in your education, in your personal life, or all these fields, it can be said that it is an ongoing self-development process. It is about setting goals for yourself and putting in place plans for achieving those goals. This is how you can start your *self-learning* journey. The following are a few techniques for self-development that will help you be well prepared to succeed in all aspects of your life.

- **Step out of your comfort zone**

“Move out of your zone of comfort. When you try something different, you can only evolve if you are willing to feel awkward and uncomfortable.” - Brian Tracy. Unexpected events unfold as you take responsibility for your life and lead you to awaken your inherent wisdom. You must be able to move out of your comfort zone at this stage and face life with enthusiasm and devotion. Stepping out of your comfort zone is very important for your career development. You need to challenge them from time to time to become a better version of yourself. If there are aspects of your work that you do not like or are not good at, those are the weaknesses that will help you build on a professional development plan. Confronting and enhancing these areas will help to drive you out of your comfort zone. It helps you to experience development and to improve your skills.

- **Establishing the goals**

You need a strategy that can be a sub-part of several target-oriented action items to accomplish a goal. Owing to bad target setting and preparation, amazingly hit principles fail. You're no better known to anyone than yourself. Consider the top 5 critical principles when setting your goal: dedication, clarity, difficulty, complexity of the challenge and feedback. Therefore, you will have to set goals for yourself and build an action plan to accomplish them. The overall performance ratio is increased by setting goals and focusing on them. Success can be helped by an optimistic approach to target setting.

- **Nurturing your strengths**

It is also known that you must conquer your shortcomings to succeed. As a consequence, many individuals have devoted their resources to pursue this suggestion. It's not about not focusing on your non-forces, by any means. Each one of you has numerous strengths and unique skills that need nurturing. And the findings can be more satisfying by nurturing their strengths. A simple way to assess your strengths is:

- **Step 1:** Think about a particular moment when you experienced a performance in which you felt truly committed and fulfilled.
- **Step 2:** List unique adjectives to define the strengths and/or character qualities you have applied while reflecting on this moment.
- **Step 3:** Review your list and pick your strengths from the top five.

- **Developing the weaknesses**

All, also the world's biggest CEOs, has their weaknesses, and identifying these weaknesses and fixing them is the real key to success. The easiest way to recognise your vulnerability is:

- **Think about your career goal:** The first thing you need to do is decide what skills you need for the job you are looking for. Do some research into your career and what abilities to develop you need.
- **Be honest with yourself:** Take a good look at yourself and evaluate where you are missing until you know about your career path and what kind of skills you need. For yourself, be honest. You have more understanding of yourself than others. Think and assess the feedback you've got and how you are trying to strengthen it.
- **Get guidance from someone you trust:** Find yourself a mentor who can be your critic. Learn from your experiences and advise those who you believe would be honest with you, not those who would only compliment you falsely. Knowing when you need feedback and asking for it is also critical.

- **Evaluate your outcomes**

Assessing the results gives you the chance to take an honest look at the areas that need improvement. You will enhance your self-awareness and experience fulfilment through this process. You automatically feel good about yourself after you have accomplished a certain objective, acquired another talent or improved a certain area of your life. In the areas of your life that you are not confident in, the more you continue to develop, the more you can increase your confidence.

The *self-learning* method is based on quality rather than quantity. *Self-learning* is an emerging method of learning that has arisen because of the online availability of learning tools. It helps you to learn when and how you want to learn what you want. You push the process of learning and this appears to be more successful than educational learning. Nowadays, career success depends on your willingness to learn, therefore, never stop learning. *Self-learning* provides the motivation that is both intrinsic and extrinsic. You get intrinsic benefits from knowing something different, including the feeling of joy and expansion. Extrinsic rewards are also the advantages that come from more knowledge, such as a new job, better interactions with others and more. Now that we have looked at the advantages of *self-learning*, take your first steps and create a life in which you have endless growth opportunities.

Kudzai Derera is a Consultant at Industrial Psychology Consultants (Pvt) Ltd, a management and human resources consulting firm.

LinkedIn: <https://zw.linkedin.com/in/kudzaidrera>

Phone: +263 242 481946-48/481950

Email: kudzai@ipcconsultants.com

Main Website: www.ipcconsultants.com

<https://thehumancapitalhub.com/articles/Self-learning-Is-A-Very-Good-Strategy-For-Career-Growth>