

By SHEERA HUSSIN

sheera.hussin@leaderonomics.com

HAVE you ever found yourself signing up for an online course and then procrastinating? Sometimes, you might even give the excuse of being 'busy' to justify why you are not able to learn more actively.

Even worse, you think to yourself that the time you spend learning online is such a waste because it stops you from doing your 'actual' job. Eventually, you say no to online learning without giving it a proper try.

When asked about it by your boss or when it is evaluated against your KPI, you log in and finish the course reluctantly, in turn, defeating the whole purpose of self-growth and career development.

Just like hitting the gym, online learning takes a certain discipline and initiative to embark on.

Let's take a look at some tips to make the most out of it.

1 IDENTIFY YOUR GOAL

Do you have anything specific you want to learn? If you do, look for the online library that offers the course.

If your current Learning Management System (LMS) does not offer what you need, sign up for other learning platforms.

If your objective is to learn one new skill a day, start with content related to your hobbies and interests. Don't give up so easily if you can't find what you want the first time.

When you finally set an attainable learning goal, consider allocating some budget to learning tools such as apps or other assistive technology.

2 FIND A LEARNING PARTNER

Get yourself a learning partner to motivate and help you track your

5 TIPS FOR ONLINE LEARNING



progress, preferably someone you are comfortable working with. Just like your gym buddy who will constantly remind and push you out of your comfort zone, your learning partner should do the same.

3 MAKE A SCHEDULE

Set aside an hour each day or one day a week for this activity. In your schedule, plan ahead on the timing and topic to allow ample time for course browsing.

Make your schedule more interesting by including some incentives upon completing several modules or online exercises.

Taking up online courses does not have to be boring; it is not necessary for you to complete one course before moving on to another.

In order to keep that motivation going, it is important that you mix up your online schedule so as to balance out your interests and the courses that maybe don't grab your attention so easily.

4 LEARN IN BITE-SIZED CHUNKS

Explore ways to retain information better through micro-learning. This is a type of learning that involves the comprehension of the learning content in small doses.

You can listen to a podcast while going for your morning run or watch learning videos while waiting for the bus. With advancements in technology, many systems even allow downloadable offline content on smartphones so that you can read them while having breakfast. Thus, there is no excuse for having no time because *micro* is now *macro*.

5 PERSEVERE

Sometimes, it may feel like your progress is slow. But with unfaltering perseverance, you are sure to make more progress than you think.

Don't give up easily when your learning is interrupted with ad-hoc errands or inconsistent habits. Persevere by taking the small steps that eventually result in big achievements.

Do not get trapped by the thought of "I'm just taking a break and will get back to it when I have time". Make time!

Knowing this, are you ready to keep the momentum going? Once you get started, not only do you get to expand your knowledge on professional courses, you also get to enhance your computer savviness too.

After all, what do you have to lose?

Like this article? Follow us @Leaderonomics on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram.



■ Sheera Hussin is working on developing penetrative content for Leaderonomics Digital Learning. She has a knack for different languages and aims to cultivate life-long learning in others. The Leaderonomics Digital Learning site is an interactive, cloud-based learning platform designed to foster limitless learning. What are your thoughts after reading this article? Contact learn@leaderonomics.com to find out how you can craft your online learning experience.

By SANDY CLARKE

editor@leaderonomics.com

IN high school, I was quite a lazy student. If a subject didn't immediately inspire me, I would set my motivation levels to 'bare minimum' and hope that was enough to make the grade.

My maths teacher was particularly mystified as to how I could be performing so poorly and yet, when it came to studying physics, I was in the top class.

"Surely the two subjects are similar," said my exasperated teacher. "How is it possible that you don't perform well in my class?"

At the time, the answer was obvious. Maths class, to me, was as exciting as an unseasoned green leaf salad, whereas physics was a subject that came alive – physics explains how the world works!

Looking back, I realise I failed to see the value in education beyond the enjoyment of immersing myself in subjects that I found fascinating.

Certainly, I lacked any awareness of the concept of "lifelong learning" and how important it would be in future with regard to helping people keep pace with social and technological trends and developments.

With the rising tide of competition and the ever-evolving, ever-demanding markets, the ability to cultivate knowledge and develop new skills is more important than ever before.

To my good fortune, by the time I left university, I had found a thirst

DEVELOPING A THIRST FOR KNOWLEDGE



for learning and was able to build up a necessary resilience to sticking with topics that didn't quite capture my imagination.

As many of us know, in our professional lives, there will be certain aspects of our work that we enjoy less than others. Occasionally, this will include venturing outside our comfort zones and having to learn a new skill or subject, which can feel like the last thing we need on top of everything else we need to juggle.

When we're in this mindset, we're at a physiological

disadvantage. Thinking about how much we don't want to do something triggers the part of the brain that makes us feel pain, which is why the idea of doing chores we hate, for example, can actually be painful.

So how can we overcome the pain of learning? In his book, *The Power of Habit*, Charles Duhigg explains that our habitual behaviours exist because the brain "is constantly looking for ways to save effort".

Therefore, we have to reframe the way we look at taking on the

kinds of challenges we'd rather avoid. Here are some of the ways to reframe the pain of learning:

1 Find a reason – however small – why you'll benefit from your experience

It might be that learning a new skill or subject will set you up for a promotion, or help you by simply enhancing your skillset in a particularly useful manner. Maybe it could help pave the way for that career change you've been thinking about.

Whatever the reason, looking for some way that you'll benefit from

the learning experience will provide you with the motivation you need to stick with it.

2 Bin the perfectionism

Especially as we get older, the notion of not immediately mastering a new concept or technique can be frustrating. In part, it might be because we don't have a lot of time to waste, but it's likely that we'll also be self-conscious in our attempts to learn something new.

Few learning experiences "click" on the first, second or even third try. The key is to aim for progress rather than perfection, and to be proud of the progress that is made.

Did You Know?

Researchers in France found, following a study conducted in 2009, that multitasking can halve the brain's working capacity. When we try to multitask, there's no flow of concentration of focus, which means we take twice as long to complete a single task. As if that wasn't bad enough, multitasking also increases our error rate by around 50 per cent!

To discover Sandy's final two methods for building a love of learning, read the rest of this article at bit.ly/learningpain

■ Sandy Clarke is the former editor at Leaderonomics. To connect with Sandy, email editor@leaderonomics.com