

# Book Summaries from www.e-LearningGuru.com

## Book Facts

- © 2004 by John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- ISBN: 0-7879-6504-9
- # Pages: 170

## How to Buy It

- [www.pfeiffer.com](http://www.pfeiffer.com)
- [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

## *Getting the Most from Online Learning*

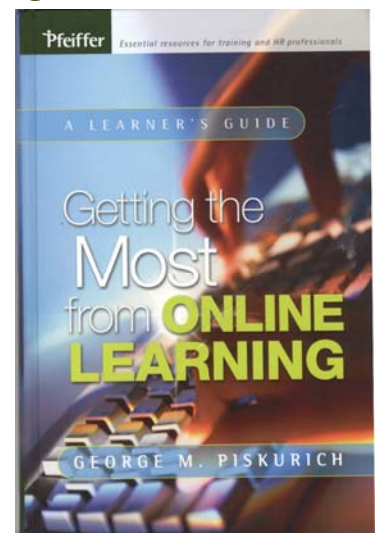
By George M. Piskurich.

### Overview

*Getting the Most from Online Learning* provides information, ideas and techniques for becoming a better online learner. We have all had years and years of practice in a traditional classroom setting but few people have had much practice learning online.

The 12 chapters in *Getting the Most from Online Learning* are written by various individuals who have had experience teaching and learning online. These people provide a variety of view points and techniques to make you a better online learner and to maximize your learning experience while online.

The book is edited by George M. Piskurich who has written other works about learning and has been active in ASTD and ISPI.



### Voices from the Edge of E-Learning

The book starts with comments from actual e-learners about e-learning. Here are some of the comments.

1. It's hard at first, but stay with it.
2. The first part of e-learning is learning to use the software.
3. Having experience with computers, any computers for any reason, is a major advantage.
4. Being comfortable with learning on your own makes it easier to succeed at e-learning.
5. If you are used to having a teacher tell you everything, you need to break that mold first.
6. Use the Web to help you learn on your own.
7. The only way to get good is to practice using it.
8. Initially, finding the right resources is the hardest part. Once you start e-learning you develop a curiosity to find new resources.
9. Look for a coach or mentor who can help you become a more efficient e-learner.
10. I found that e-learning provides me with easier, faster, and more up-to-date content than classrooms.

## **Becoming a More Self-Directed Learner**

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*"Your best preparation for e-learning success is to enhance your readiness for self-directed learning."*

*-- Lucy M. and Paul J. Guglielmino*

Adopt your attitude toward learning on your own as a continuous self-improvement project. Become more aware of the messages you send yourself about yourself as a learner.

Examine your thoughts, attitudes, and your self-talk when engaged in learning by using the following questions:

- Do I feel capable of finding a way to learn almost anything I might need to learn?
- Do I usually take the initiative in learning, or do I wait for someone to tell me what needs to be learned and how and when it will be learned?
- Am I focused on gaining the information and skills or just meeting the requirements of a class or training session?
- When problems or barriers occur, do I feel overburdened or defeated, or do I remind myself that overcoming obstacles is just a natural part of the learning process and quickly begin to mentally play with ways of meeting the challenge and accomplishing my learning goal?
- Does my self-talk sound more like "What if I tried it this way?" than "If only this hadn't happened!"?
- Am I willing to admit that I need help sometimes and seek it from learning facilitators, experts, friends, co-learners?
- Am I proud of what I learn on my own? Do I acknowledge my learning accomplishments and gain satisfaction from them?

## **Chat Rooms and Discussion Boards**

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*"Interestingly, the depth of interaction that occurs in a chat room is often much greater than during a synchronous session, or even in a live classroom."*

*-- George Piskurich*

Here are some guidelines for effectively participating in a Discussion Board.

- Value your colleagues' opinions.
- Use emoticons, but use them sparingly.
- Don't use Discussion Board to ask personal or administrative questions, use it to explore and interact.
- Think before reacting to a comment.
- Even if a colleague writes an angry message, keep your cool.
- Remember that everyone may not know the acronyms that are very familiar to you.
- More than five lines is too long for a posting.

Here are some guidelines you should follow when participating in a Chat Room.

- Introduce yourself before chatting.
- It's OK to lurk for a while, but then jump in.
- There is often a delay in chat postings, so be sure you are responding to the right posting
- Take private or off-the-topic discussions offline using a bulletin board, or email.
- Keep your comments short and to the point.
- Think before reacting.
- It is hard to tell a joke in chat.

## Building Successful Online Relationships

Most learning comes from our interaction and communication with peers and instructors in class. E-learning is beginning to allow more and more of these opportunities. To gain knowledge and learning from others, there are certain guidelines for appropriate interaction.

Here is a list of tips for gaining the most from the online learning experience with others.

- 1) **Remember, you are dealing with a person**—Email, chat rooms, and speaker phones can hide this important fact.
- 2) **Behave in the virtual world as you would in the real world**—In a class strictly for personal development, you may develop informal friendships, complete with gossip and note passing (IM'ing). If you are in a course for your job, or others are, expect to develop more professional relationships.
- 3) **Share**—Give back to the class. Give your experiences during your learning, and your opinions when relevant. You have to “get to give.”
- 4) **Forgive**—Assume others in class mean the best and that slip-ups and misinterpretations of your brilliance are accidental.
- 5) **Communicate**—Write and speak clearly and concisely. Say what you mean and then stop.
- 6) **Use appropriate emoticons**—These are little symbols that help add meaning to a sentence or a phrase. For example, adding ☺ to the phrase “That will teach you,” provides a completely different meaning than adding ☹.

Good e-learning requires good relationships. Don't be afraid to have a professional, businesslike relationship with your fellow learners. You will find that personalities come through loud and clear via distance learning.

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*“As the state of e-learning progresses, more opportunities are arising for you to learn online with others.”*

*-- Doug Liberati*

## Managing Distractions for E-Learners

This chapter focuses on ways that you and your company can work to eliminate distractions that confront many an online learner.

- 1) **Alert management when you register or are asked to take part in an online event** – This will allow your manager to adjust priorities, schedules and workloads so the class can be attended without distractions. Often times managers are not aware that an employee has registered for an event.
- 2) **Find alternate locations onsite for participants to take computer-based training** – Designate a space in a quiet room free of clutter. Take the course at your worksite but in a location other than your desk or cubicle.
- 3) **Confirm company expectations frequently so everyone knows that e-learning does take place and that it needs to be taken seriously** – Consider providing signs that have printed the words “E-Learning in Progress” for posting on doors and cubicles.
- 4) **Set reasonable time goals and meet them** – Create time frames so that your manager and co-workers don't feel you are “playing” on the computer when you are, in fact, learning.
- 5) **Remember to control what you can control** – Turn off the ringer on your phone, shut down email, post a note on your door. You can't control other people who may be inclined to interrupt you but you can find ways to reduce their ability to interfere with your learning.

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*“There are all kinds of reasons learning doesn't work.”*

*-- Wayne Turmel*

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## About the Contributors and Author

A unique aspect of this book is the contribution of many e-learning professionals. The book provides several different perspectives on what it takes to be an effective online learner.

The contributors include:

- Janet F. Piskurich
- Lucy M. and Paul J. Guglielmino
- Harvey Singh
- Ryan Watkins
- Doug Liberati
- Wayne Turmel
- Huey B. Long
- George M. Piskurich
- Bill Knapp
- Russ Brock
- Carole Richardson

The book is edited by George M. Piskurich.

**George M. Piskurich** is an organizational learning and performance consultant, specializing in e-learning interventions, performance analysis, and telecommuting. His workshops on self-directed learning, structured mentoring, and preparing learners for e-learning have been rated "outstanding" by participants from many organizations.

With more than twenty-five years of experience in learning technology, he has been a classroom instructor, training managers, instructional designer, and e-learning consultant for multinational clients and smaller organizations. He has created classroom seminars, OJT mentoring systems, and e-learning interventions.

He has been a presenter and workshop leader at more than thirty conferences and symposia, and is an active member of both ISPI and ASTD.

He has written books on instructional technology, self-directed learning, instructional design and telecommuting, authored journal articles and book chapters on various topics, and I currently editing two books on e-learning. In 1986 he was ASTD's "Instructional Technologist of the Year," and won the "Best Use of Instructional Technology in Business" award in 1992.

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