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Introduction

In this class we'll talk about what everyone's experience has been like working/learning remotely and discuss what the advantages/disadvantages are and how to manage the disadvantages.

Why is this important ? because remote work/learning is becoming more common and important than ever and you can apply this information in your future remote endeavors.

What is Remote Work/Learning

Remote work/learning is any work that a person is doing from outside the company's office/classroom.

What's Your Experience Been like

Have everyone in the class answer the following questions:

- Introduce yourself
- What would you like to learn from this class?
- What's your experience has been like with remote work/learning? What do you like/dislike?
- Which tools do you use for remote work/learning? What do you like/dislike about them?
- What would you like to study in the future and how do you think remote work/learning will play a part?

My Experience

I've in been in the IT industry close to 30 years and have been doing remote work/learning in some form that whole time. Currently I work for Subaru and I'm the tech lead for the MySubaru web site (www.mysubaru.com). I currently work full time from home and have been doing all my learning/classes online to keep on top of new technologies/tools. I read at least a few hours every day on various topics that interest me. I work with an onsite team of ~15 people and also work with a remote team of ~20 people in Hyderabad India.

There's a ~10 hour time difference between Camden NJ and Hyderabad India (8:00am our time is 5:30pm their time) so when we start work they are finishing their work day and vice versa. There's only a few hours each day when I have the opportunity to communicate in real time with someone in India (i.e. synchronous communication using IM/audio or visual) otherwise I'll need to wait until the next day to get a response (i.e. asynchronous communication) which is very challenging when doing collaborative work.

Things I've Learned about Learning Remotely

Issue	Comment	Link
Get in the habit of keeping a schedule	• Participation is critical. • know when you start and end the day • know when you can take breaks. Make sure you take at least a 5 minute break every hour Usually this is provided by the instructor. If not ask the instructor for it	
Get in the habit of keeping a to-do list	Make a list of items you are responsible for and when they are due. Usually this is provided by the instructor. If not ask the instructor for it	
Get in the habit of participating.	Make a conscious effort to participate and ask questions. 9 times out of 10 someone else has the same question as you and when you get an answer to a question you are helping them too !	
Make online learning as interactive as possible	Learn by doing is a great way to learn. some examples of this are - Take quizzes after chapters to reinforce what was discussed - Summarize key ideas of what you learned in your own words	
Take advantage of the time before classes start	Most good instructors will provide you a list of things you can do before the class starts so they don't need to be done during class. If they don't provide it to you ask the instructor for it. These include things like. - Installing software and configuring any tools	

	- Getting access to a site you will be using - Prerequisites topics/subjects that is needed to understand the material being taught	
Take advantage of the time in between breaks	For any material you missed or didn't understand make sure to ask the instructor for help during the breaks so you can get up to speed	
Be present (focus)	There are a lot distractions on your computer. Make sure remove these distractions (e.g. web site(s) you like) and pay attention. Make sure to take notes of key ideas to reinforce learning	
Learn how to be a better learner	See another class I taught in the past. Click on link to the right	Learning How To Learn
As a teacher its harder to read the room	A good teacher does more than stand up and lecture and answer the occasional question. The delivery of the material must be tailored, day by day and even minute by minute, to the classroom dynamic. For that, one must can read the visual cues which is harder to do with remote learning	
There are less distractions in a classroom	The physical presence of teachers and other students forces us to focus more than doing remote learning alone There are a lot of distractions using a computer, at home, alone. We also tend to multitask a lot more which reduces our focus/cognitive engagement, which in turn reduces the amount learned. Our cognitive processing capacity is limited. If we're texting while we're listening,	

	we'll likely absorb less of what we hear than if we're listening without texting. That's one reason many professors don't even allow laptops in their classrooms. They're just too tempting	
Humor/Fun Factor is harder in a remote setting	Research suggests, that the instructors classroom humor, when closely related to the material, improves student performance And the decision on where to insert the humor can be made on the fly by reading visual cues of the students which is difficult in a remote learning setting	

Things I've Learned about Working Remotely

Issue	Pro(+) Con(-)	Summary	Links more info
You WILL Feel Left Out Occasionally	-	It's very important to over communicate and stay connected with your team. Make sure to attend all non work related events too. This improves team morale (e.g. virtual team outings and/or happy hours) and builds strong relationships.	link
Networking is MUCH Harder for Remote Workers	-	Learning about new opportunities is more difficult when working remotely. • Join company groups to network with other employees in other departments. • Join other professional networking groups like LinkedIn to stay connected with people that have similar experiences/skills as you	Linked In
It Gets Lonely	-	Even if you are very busy you may feel lonely because you are not physically around people and only interact with people in a certain way (i.e. email. Video conferencing, im chat). Make sure you choose different work locations throughout the week. Some ideas are coffee shops or going to work in a conference room. A change in scenery and getting fresh air outside goes a long way.	
You will get distracted	-	• Pick a work room with minimal distractions. • Keep an organized work desk/area • Also block apps/sites on your computer that can distract you. If you want to check those apps/sites during the day having it running on another computer that you check only during your break time. • Be disciplined/focused about the time you spend during the day	
less physical activity	-	With no reason to leave the house for work you tend to be less physically active. Develop a workout routine to stay healthy, active, and refreshed. You can also find a hobby to help you maintain your energy throughout the day. Make sure to schedule this on your calendar so others know your status	
Building relationships is harder	-	Task Based work is better suited for remote work. Building relationships is harder because • There is a lot of nonverbal communication that happens when we are physically talking to	

		someone that is hard to replicate even over video conferencing • Video conferencing/talking with someone is faster/more efficient than using other tools we tend to prefer when doing remote work (im, group chat, email…) • Proximity is Powerful- which holds that people who have frequent encounters tend to develop stronger relationships, make time and schedule face to face time. It's important !	
Productivity Expectations May Differ	-	Expectations are usually higher because you are more available and people can't physically see you be sure to talk over your expectations with your manager. Likewise, be sure that you understand everything that's expected of you as a remote worker including hours and availability.	
Constant worry about what others might say/think	-	be available online during the entire work day and make sure others can see you. People think you don't do anything all day — it's a common misconception, but in reality, employees who work remotely typically get more done than people who work in an office. Have confidence in your work and take comfort in that feeling. The fact that you're worried about your output means you care about your work. Anyone who cares about their work is naturally going to work harder.	
Positive Environmental Impact	+	The 3.9 million employees who work from home at least half time reduce greenhouse gas emissions by the equivalent of **taking more than 600,000 cars off the road** **for an entire year**, according to the "State of Telecommuting in the U.S. Employee Workforce"	
Less time commuting	+	• I spent about 2 hours in commute time every day (an hour each way) • Another 30 minutes in getting prepared for work as well • money saved on gas • money saved on wear and tear on a vehicle (standard costs are 40cents to 60cents a mile driven)	8 BENEFITS OF ALLOWING EMPLOYEES TO WORK REMOTELY
Increased Productivity and Performance	+	Working from home usually leads to fewer interruptions, less office politics, a quieter noise level, and less and/or more efficient meetings. Add in the lack of a commute, remote workers typically have more time and fewer	Benefits of remote work

		distractions, which leads to increased productivity—a huge benefit of working from home for both employees and employers alike.	
Happier Employees	+	[Remote, flexible workers tend to be happier](#) and more • loyal employees, in part because [working from home has been shown to lower stress](#), provide more time for hobbies and interests, and [improve personal relationships,](#) among other things. • coworker and manager relationships can be more positive without the distractions and politics that come along with an in-office job. A reported • [72% of employers say remote work](#) has a high impact on employee retention—plainly put, employees are sticking with their employer when they have remote work options. • [Working from home can also lead to better health](#) in a variety of ways: more time for physical activity, the ability to eat healthier, the ability to recover from illness or surgery at home, less exposure to illnesses, ease of caring for a health issue or disability, and the option to create a comfortable and ergonomic workspace.	
Increased Benefits for Employers	+	• Increased productivity and performance • Improved employee retention • Less commuting time resulting in less absenteeism • Talent Pool is bigger and better • Less office space needed • Less support staff needed(security, cafeteria …)	[19 BENEFITS OF REMOTE WORKING FOR EMPLOYERS](#)
Less Interruptions	+	Interruptions (unexpecting cubicle visits) and impromptu cubicle meetings and cross talk are eliminated when you do remote work which is mostly a good thing (sometimes I learn something new when I hear side conversations 😊) This forces people to schedule meetings and stay focused on what to discuss	
Self-Directed Learning Suddenly Becomes Crucial	+	You are in charge of your learning. This is also true of non-remote work but I believe expectations are raised when you're a remote worker because now the company can virtually hire someone anywhere in the world. So the talent pool and credentials of those	

		applicants have increased dramatically which forces you to keep pace.	
Set a clear work schedule or routine	+	Not having a fixed schedule will make you postpone work indefinitely. • I use the same schedule as my colleagues who work from the office just because it's much easier to communicate with them this way. • schedule a few short non work time events to give yourself breaks and schedule it so others know your status • Having a set start and end date for work will help you better manage your tasks and keep your work-life balance in check too.	
Schedule meetings on a regular basis with people you work with	+	Schedule regular one on one video conferences with your manager and people who report to you. Keeping a regular schedule to get/give status and keep the lines of communication open are critical. It's also much easier/faster to talk with someone than to try to do it thru other means (email, im …)	
It's Not for Everyone – and That's OK	+-	Some people lack the discipline it takes to focus in an entirely newly distracting environment, Others simply can't work without the buzz of a busy office or the casual banter of their cubicle colleagues. Whatever the reason, not everyone is suited to remote work – and that's okay.	

Remote Work Requirements

For remote work some "must have" features are

- High speed internet connection (cable, DSL, Wi-fi..) minimum 3-5 Mbps
- secure connection if using WI-FI (WPA2)
- Relatively dedicated connection, which means only a few people have access to it which will improve your bandwidth and security
- VPN connection if you need to connect to work network.
- Headset. Great for blocking out sounds at home and improving the quality/volume of your mic (sounds better because mic is right next to your mouth)
- Web Cam for Audio/video conferencing
- Audio/Video Conferencing Software so people can hear and see you
- Screen Sharing. So you can share your work (demo, presentations)..
- IM (so can people can chat with you to ask you quick questions)
- Remote collaboration on documents and files (e.g. SharePoint, google docs, office online …)
- Issue/Task tracker (a tool to track work is critical. e.g. Jira, ServiceNow, GitHub..)
- Email work account

Common Tools Used

Tool	Features	Links
Zoom	IM Audio Video	https://zoom.us/signin
Skype	IM Audio Video Screen Sharing	https://www.skype.com/en/
Microsoft Teams	IM Audio Video Team Based File Sharing Screen Sharing	Microsoft Teams
Slack	IM Audio Video Team Based File Sharing 3rd party apps	https://slack.com/
Webex	IM Audio	https://www.webex.com/

	Video Screen Sharing	
Jabber	IM Audio Video	Cisco Jabber
Fleep	IM Audio Video Team Based File Sharing	https://fleep.io/
Google Meet	IM Audio Video	Google Meet
Join.me	IM Audio Video Screen Sharing	Join.me
Google Docs	File Sharing	https://www.google.com/docs/about/
Office Online	File Sharing	https://office.live.com/start/Word.aspx

Additional Information

Free Courses Remote Work

https://learning.linkedin.com/blog/productivity-tips/new-to-working-remotely--these-resources-can-help

https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/collections/remote-working

https://www.linkedin.com/learning/paths/remote-working-setting-yourself-and-your-teams-up-for-success

https://www.classcentral.com/course/openhpi-introduction-to-successful-remote-teamwork-13550

https://www.coursera.org/search?query=remote+work+&utm_source=gg&utm_medium=sem&utm_content=Sitelink-freecourses-searchquery&campaignid=380484307&adgroupid=37885224444&device=c&keyword=coursera+courses&matchtype=b&network=g&devicemodel=&adpostion=&creativeid=322364986208&hide_mobile_promo=&gclid=EAIaIQobChMIsa_RxYyq6gIVl5OzCh2PowuDEAAYASABEgL2-_D_BwE

Free Courses

https://www.coursera.org/collections/free-online-courses-finish-in-a-day

https://www.edx.org/

http://www.openculture.com/freeonlinecourses

https://online-learning.harvard.edu/catalog/free

Additional Links

https://www.wordstream.com/blog/ws/2017/06/16/working-remotely

https://www.paymoapp.com/blog/working-remotely/

https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2020-07-12/the-greatest-teaching-techniques-don-t-compute-over-zoom