The Tub of Self-Learning: Hold Your Breath!

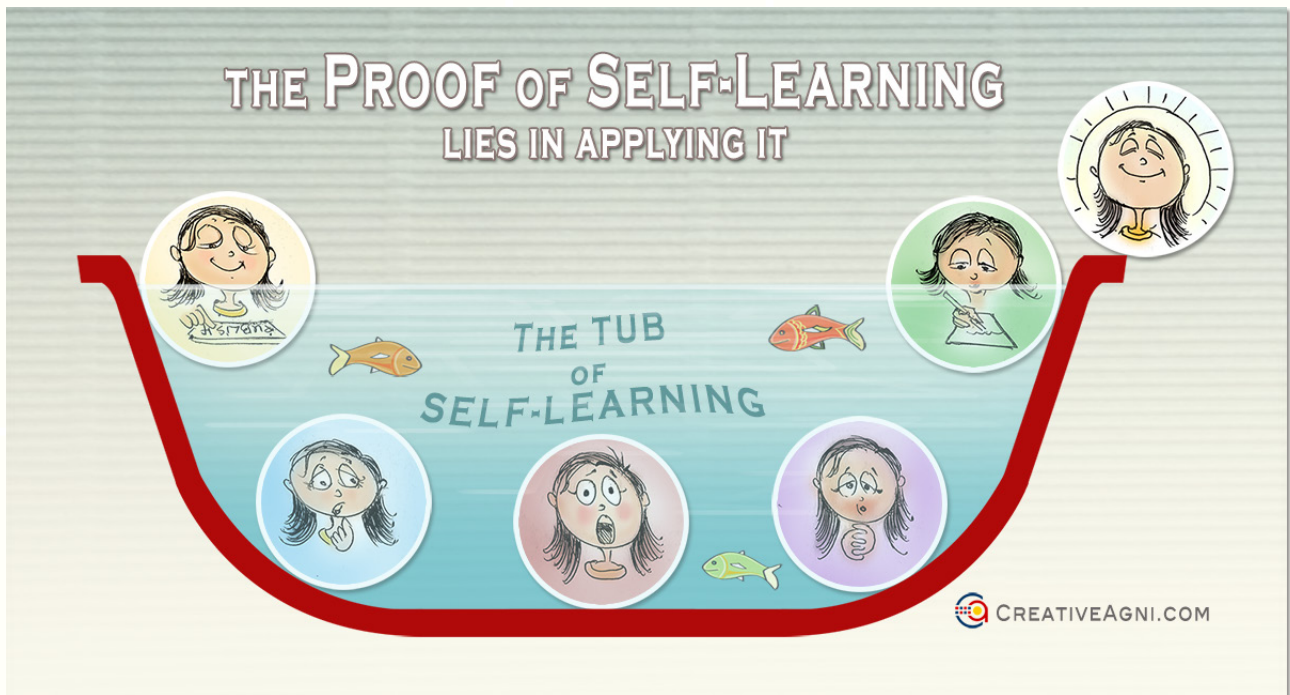THE PROOF OF SELF-LEARNING
LIES IN APPLYING IT

THE TUB OF SELF-LEARNING

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The Creative Fire within You

Disclaimer:

This is a humorous take on my attempt to publish an article on LinkedIn and while there might be a few hidden learning opportunities in here, please don't take a chance. Your time is precious and splashing about in a strange tub of self-learning might not be the best use of it. With this, I've made my intention to dissuade you from reading it known, and I will not be held responsible for any accidents in this particular tub of self-learning.

Self-Learning or Autodidacticism - What exactly is it?

Well, when you use the available resources for learning and study on your own, you engage in self-learning, which is also called in didactics as Autodidacticism. I know, asking and answering this question is insulting your intelligence and mine, but without putting self-learning into perspective, how can we discuss the precious tub that exemplifies its learning curve?

Those who've studied in our stereotypical government schools and have suffered through a continuous stream of absentee teachers, have had close encounters with this kind of learning for ages, but in the present era, self-learning is associated with using the overabundance of web-resources to learn a skill on your own.

This is exactly what I did, when I dived head first into LinkedIn publishing, and published my first article. To keep the curious cats from scratching my eyes out, here's a link to the article in question: "5 Instructional Weapons to Win the Microlearning War" You will notice that unlike the current article, the previous article has a q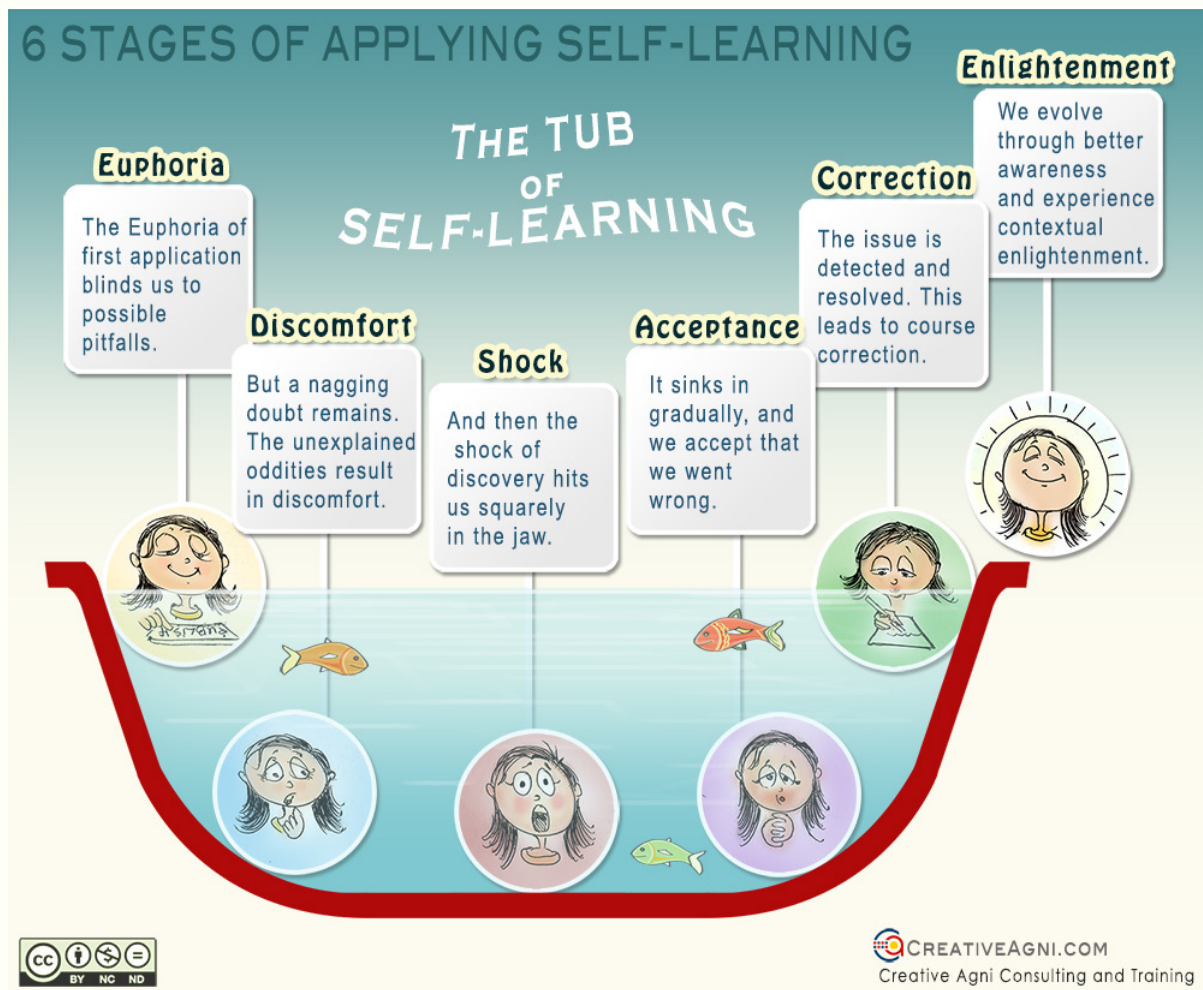uiet dignity. It appears to have been penned by a rather sensible individual, and I was obviously feeling rather proud of having written it.

The euphoria that accompanied my pride of having accomplished something new, blinded me. Thus began my descent into the tub. it.

The Self-Learning Tub

I'll take a moment to explain this infographic (ok, I'm exaggerating - it would take more than a moment, but this isn't a serious essay for which objectivity is essential.) You see the face of the woman in the circles? Well, that's mine. At the extreme left, you see the proud and euphoric me, who sinks into the tub and stays there for a while (holding her breath under water,) until she finally emerges at the right edge of the tub. Then you see the LinkedIn-enlightened me.

Following Reigeluth's Elaboration Theory I must get into the details of my misadventure and in the process explain the Tub of Self-Learning to you.

6 STAGES OF APPLYING SELF-LEARNING

Stage 1: Euphoria

It all started when I published my first post here. *(This, by the way, is the second.)*

Like all self-learners, I was dying to push that little blue Publish button at the top right. I had read the whole article without my reading glasses that I had conveniently forgotten at office and corrected the glaring typos. I had checked the graphics and they looked ready to party.

Then I pounced upon the

Publish button, wrote a quick summary and added a few hashtags as recommended by every helpful site, and thumped my own back.

Alas! I hadn't counted on the courteous and helpful LinkedIn program that displayed a popup with a message asking me me to share my article with my connections. How I wish I had never laid eyes on that message. But I've seen enough Final Destination movies to realize that when fate has planned something for you, despite your best

efforts, it shall come to a pass.

Paying attention to that message, my dear reader, was my undoing. I saw a box that looked like the regular Messaging Box and assumed that if I added my connections to the "Please check out my article" message, I'd be able to send private messages to those connections (something like the bcc field in the email.) So, I merrily added all those connections who I thought would find the post relevant (read: who would pat my back for taking the plunge!) Vanity, my friend, is a dangerous companion on social media networks.

Blinded by the Euphoria of having cracked the LinkedIn Article Posting Puzzle all on my own, I didn't see the possible pitfall of this vain act.

Stage 2: Discomfort

Oh well. LinkedIn's suggestion worked. Many of the connections I had pinged replied back and all these replies appeared on the same thread called the "Conversation," and I felt my heart sinking. Something was wrong! I also tried replying to one of the messages, but I had only one box to write messages to all. Something was wrong.

As I sat in front of my computer, feeling a little blue, I realized that it won't kill me to dig deeper and figure out what was going on.

I messaged a friend and requested a screenshot, which he was quick to send. *(Thank you, Amit!)* One look at it and I fell off my chair. I realized that I had actually started a kind of conference – where everyone could see everyone else's messages! Wow!

At the bottom of the tub, when I was struggling to breathe, my cognitive processes had begun to slow down, and so it still didn't occur to me that this also meant that everyone on the list was getting notified of every message and every bit of action that was happening on that conversation!

The discomfort was deepening. The euphoria had evaporated long ago. I was sinking lower in the tub. If the tub was an open ocean I'd

THE TUB OF SELF-LEARNING
STAGE 2 OF 6

Discomfort

But a nagging doubt remains. The gaps in our knowledge aren't able to explain random oddities, and we feel a strange discomfort. A premonition of sorts...
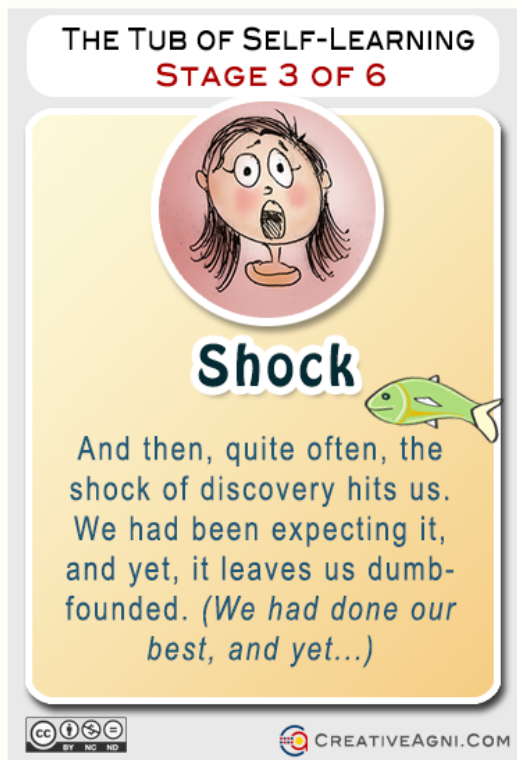
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have likened myself to the Titanic unaware of the iceberg it was about to hit, but a tub is a tub and a metaphor can't be changed when you are halfway through an illustration.

Stage 3: Shock

Then one of the connections left the conversation, followed by another.

I gasped and instead of air, I gulped half-a-gallon of the metaphorical water.

THE TUB OF SELF-LEARNING
STAGE 3 OF 6

Shock

And then, quite often, the shock of discovery hits us. We had been expecting it, and yet, it leaves us dumbfounded. *(We had done our best, and yet...)*

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And then it hit me!

Everyone was getting notified of all the messages in the conversation. I had unwittingly become a nuisance! I hung my head in shame. Had I been an ostrich, I'd have buried my head in sand. (Oh wait, I'm in a tub. Can't mix my metaphors.)

Now reflect on this with me.

After I buy I new car, would I visit every house in my neighborhood, install loudspeakers and mikes in their living rooms and then connect all the speakers and the mikes to a hub that would broadcast everything that anyone said about my new car to everyone at anytime?

No, I wouldn't. But in the LinkedIn world, I had done exactly the same, hadn't I?

The shock got me right to the bottom of the tub, where the pressure was the highest and I would've stayed there if I wasn't the buoyant kind. But I am a diehard optimist, so I grew a couple of fins, supplied some oxygen to my gray cells, and got myself thinking again.

Stage 4: Acceptance

The first thought obviously was to give myself a clean chit and lay the blame elsewhere - on LinkedIn perhaps, or on the Instructional Design and Content Development Course Session that I'm currently conducting - it could've distracted me from focusing on the work at hand.

Even submerged in the water with a couple of

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Acceptance

It sinks in gradually. We accept that we went wrong and that our self-learning process left some gaping holes in the fabric of our knowledge.

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dorsal fins, I saw the idea for what it was. Lame!

So I shook my head and started thinking afresh.

First, I needed to feel better and not by laying the blame on someone else's door.

- *I'm not perfect, I told myself, nobody is.*
- *A little more of this feel-good self-talk and I'll be thinking clearly again, I told myself.*
- *Could I have eliminated the possibility of this faux pas entirely? I asked myself.*

Of course, No! The risk of such errors happening cannot be eliminated. A zillion years ago, when I was a Project Manager, I learned that risks materialize despite all your efforts, and once they do they must be managed in the best possible manner.

So I accepted that I bungled up, figured out why, and promised myself that it won't happen again. That made me feel so much better!

Now I was refreshed, re-energized, re-vamped to look at the problem at hand with a fresh pair of fish-eyes.

Review the gravity of the situation with me:

A couple of cool connections had already left the conversation – others would soon, even though the messages had slowed to a trickle, still it wasn't a nice feeling to see people leaving. What could I do to tell everyone that this was an error and not a well-planned out torture strategy?

And the answer appeared to me in a flash that brightened the whole tub for a fraction of a moment.

Stage 5: Correction

I took two corrective actions for the two audience groups that the accident had clearly delineated for me – *Connections who had stayed and Connections who had left.*

For those gentle souls who were still in the conversation, I wrote a message, explaining my error, apologized, and told them that they could leave if they wanted. I received a few pats on my back for this attempt (that incidentally sent my vanity soaring high once again!)

For the two connections who had left the

conversation and helped me see my error so that I could correct it, I sent private messages. I'm grateful that both saw it fit to reply.

Now, as you can see, I was emerging from the Tub of Self-Learning, morphing from my fish-avatar into my human form. The fins retracted into my back (Wolverine's steel claws will aid

your visualization,) and the scales on my skin started disappearing.

The experience left me wiser, the correction left my heart lighter.

Stage 6: Enlightenment

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STAGE 6 OF 6

Enlightenment

We evolve through these cycles of mistakes and corrections and experience contextual enlightenment.

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I learned many valuable lessons.

1. Don't do everything that LinkedIn asks you to do. Don't trust every pop-up that pops up on your screen. When you learn on your own, you must be more vigilant - because nobody's going to caution you about the mistakes you could make.

2. Self-learn but be cautious and read about everything that you attempt to do. While the Self Learning Tub will still exist, it will be shallower and you won't be struggling for breath when the shock sinks you to the bottom. *(Do not forget to equip yourself with a learning snorkel and a life-jacket.)*

3. Send out an SOS. People are good in general. Fishes are good too, but people are a lot better. People help, hint, even forgive your learning errors. Don't stay at the bottom of the tub. Take corrective action. It's good to remember that:

Going Wrong is the First Step in Doing Right.

Now that I am enlightened, I'm not going to *start a conversation and issue a public invitation to my friends and connections* to invite them for a refreshing plunge in the Self-Learning Tub, instead, I'll use hashtags!

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- Rapid eLearning Development with Adobe Captivate (REDAC) Certificate Course

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- C2D2: Creativity for Content Design and Development (2-Day)
- GoT: Gamification of Trainings (2-Day)
- ISW: Instructional Storywriting and Storytelling (1-Day)
- CT: Cartooning for Trainers (1-Day)
- CWW: Content Writing for the Web (1-Day)

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