

5 Reasons You Should Continue Your Education

By Sarah Hasan

Six years ago when I graduated with a Bachelors in Human Resource Management, I was glad to be finally 'DONE' with school. And, I had no plans to return. Until recently, I have been content with where I am today. I am blessed to work at a place where I have learned and experienced so much. I have discovered skills that I never knew I had.

But I came to realize the importance of continuing education. The credibility that comes with completing a graduate degree, in addition to the increased chance for a promotion or raise, was only part of what lured me back. My biggest motivation was my daughter. I wanted to become a role model for her, just like my mother is for me. I wanted her be proud of me and my accomplishments. And then I realized the longer I delayed returning to school, the more difficult the return would get.

So, I decided it was time for me to rediscover my strengths and add to my skills to further my professional career. I started a Master's degree program at National Louis University (NLU). The decision to go back to school wasn't easy. My tuition was covered through NLU, so I didn't have much of a financial burden. However, I was nervous about whether I would be able to balance family, work, and professional studies. I had long conversations with myself. To help with my decision, I wrote down the pros and cons of going back to school. While there were many significant pros (as you will see below), I was not able to come up with any meaningful cons.

- 1. Continuing education extends your qualifications.** Whether you are a center director, family child care provider, trainer, technical assistance specialist, or teacher, you will gain knowledge and practical training that will help you master your responsibilities. Having a degree is always a plus; it provides a competitive edge.
- 2. Continuing education demonstrates success.** It shows employers your motivation, desire to be successful, and aspiration to gain professional development.
- 3. Continuing education builds your confidence.** When you have more knowledge of a topic, you are able to speak confidently and make more thoughtful decisions.
- 4. Continuing education polishes your skills and helps to rediscover other skills such as public speaking and writing.** You will learn from experts in the field who will share their experience and knowledge, giving you insights to the real world.

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- 5. Continuing education helps you to become a better team player.** Typically, classes involve group projects and assignments. Determining how to divide the workload and assign tasks will help you identify your leadership skills and how to improve collaboration with others.

These are just some of the many pros to continuing education that I have personally experienced. I never would have thought I would be able to write a blog post because writing doesn't come naturally for me. Yet, it was writing research papers for my coursework that gave me the confidence to do so.

Now that I have successfully completed my first semester with only one year left until I graduate, I am so glad that I returned to school. Meeting people outside of work and family is so important for professional and personal growth. It also helps you expand your social network, exposes you to diverse ideas, and provides opportunities to meet people within the same field. So far, the entire experience has been very enriching and rewarding. I strongly believe that, if there is an opportunity, everyone should continue their education—be it through formal or informal education.

- When considering a significant commitment such as continuing formal education or long-term educational opportunities, take into account the following factors:
- Determine what will hold your interest for months and possibly years.
- Make sure you are ready to invest time and commit to the program.
- Ensure that you have a support system of family, friends, or co-workers to help you through this major life change.
- Weigh your financial situation before making a decision.
- Explore financial supports.

Sarah Hasan is an ExceleRate Office Manager at the McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership at National Louis University. Prior to working at the McCormick Center, Sarah worked at RR Donnelley & Sons as a Human Resource Assistant. She is currently pursuing her Masters in Human Resource Management and Development at National Louis University.

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