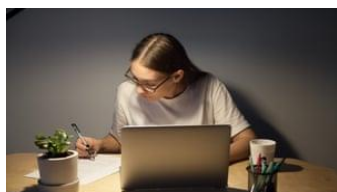


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“Online learning: how to acquire new skills during lockdown”



Millions of users are signing up for free courses taught by professors from Harvard and other top universities. For many of us in self-isolation, it can feel like the coronavirus has put the world on hold as we wait for release from our temporary imprisonment. But increasing numbers of people are using the time to build their skillset, with an upsurge in enrolments on online learning platforms such as edX, FutureLearn and Coursera, which offer “massive open online courses” – or Moocs.

Coursera, for instance, has seen an eightfold increase in enrolments for social science, personal development, arts and humanities courses since the start of the coronavirus outbreak. “It’s unprecedented,” says the company’s chief product officer, Shravan Goli. (In late March, its Science of Well Being course saw 500,000 new enrolments in a single weekend.)

Devoting some of our quarantine time to self-education makes sense. Besides helping to **bolster** your career during this economic uncertainty, learning a new skill can give you a sense of control that will help cope with anxiety engendered by the epidemic.

As James Wallman says in his book *Time and How to Spend It*, personal growth is central to many psychological theories of long-term happiness. So, although an hour listening to a lecture may not be as enticing as the instant gratification of reality TV or social media, it will

lead to greater life-satisfaction in the long term. “You could say that humans are like bicycles: if you’re not heading towards something you fall over,” Wallman says. And when we are social distancing, online courses are one of the best ways to do that.

How can I stay motivated?

Even if you have chosen a course that is perfectly suited to your goals, you may find your initial enthusiasm evaporates and your discipline trails off. “Lack of routine and time is often the biggest hurdle,” says writer and regular Mooc user Bianca Barratt. Her advice is to try to set up a schedule and “treat it like a physical class you’ve signed up for. Show up when you say you will, make an effort with the class exercises and homework and complete the course in full.”

What do I do after completing the course?

For some, this may be just the start of the journey – furnishing you with a greater confidence to learn and the motivation to take it further. If you find that you’re hooked, many of the platforms also provide accredited bachelors and master’s degrees from selected universities, though this will be more expensive.

For others, the completion of a single course will be enough. But whatever your goals, the quest to learn a new skill or discipline may be the perfect distraction from the frustrations of self-isolation – allowing you to connect with new people and transforming this period into a time of enlightenment and self-discovery.

Adaptation of the article written by David Robson, The Guardian, Sunday 19 April 2020

A1. Answer the following questions in 12-15 words. (12 points)

1. Write two reasons used by the author to explain why someone may wish to be self-educated during quarantine time.
Boost your career and have a sense of control over your everyday life.
2. **“You could say that humans are like bicycles: if you’re not heading towards something you fall over”**. Explain this view in your own words.
People should always set goals and do their best to achieve them. If we don’t set goals we may very easily fail in any attempt (...be distracted).
3. What does the writer suggest for those “addicted” to this kind of education?
They could take their studies to the next level by pursuing either a bachelors or a master’s degree.

A2. Choose the correct answer A, B or C (18 points)

1. The key to long term happiness may be...

- a. instant gratification of reality shows or social media
- b. **personal growth**
- c. social distancing

2. The word closest in meaning to the word bolster is...

- a. strain
- b. alleviate
- c. **strengthen**

3. According to Bianca Barratt....

- a. motivation evaporates because of the lack of physical activity.
- b. **you need to show diligence and commitment.**
- c. you need to have external motivation

4. The attempt to learn something new...

- a. should definitely lead to taking your studies to the next level.
- b. **may offer refuge to those who need to escape form the pressure that a lockdown may cause.**
- c. may be distract you in a negative way.

5. Taking an online course in a period of self-isolation....

- a. could potentially put strain to your personal relationships.
- b. may allow you to express yourself through something creative.
- c. **may allow you to enhance your interpersonal skills.**

6. Something unprecedented is....

- a. **something that has never happened again.**
- b. something that has happened many times before.
- c. something totally unacceptable

B1. Use the correct form of the words below. There are three words that you will not need to use. (2x5= 10 points)

| | | | | | | | |
|----------|---------|--------|------------|--------|--------|--------|---------|
| courtesy | deceive | allege | convention | trauma | assign | colour | survive |
|----------|---------|--------|------------|--------|--------|--------|---------|

1. Her warm and **courteous** smile gave me the strength to go on.
2. People who have survived car accidents need time to recover after their **traumatic** experiences.
3. According to the witness, the gangster **allegedly** broke into the woman’s car.
4. Families without tech access receive paper packets, which have the same **assignments** as those found on virtual platforms
5. Nowadays, with huge malls in big cities, small businesses are fighting for **survival** .

B2 . Make the necessary changes to form sentences close in meaning to the ones in column A (2x5= 10 points)

| COLUMN A | COLUMN B |
|---|--|
| 1. If he notifies the company, call me immediately | Should he notify the company, call me immediately (2 words) |
| 2. I feel confident enough, because of the fact that I have been involved in this kind of activity for so long. | Having been involved in this kind of activity for so long, I feel confident enough. (2 words) |
| 3. Is someone going to deal with this complicated problem? | Is this complicated problem going to be dealt with? (2 words) |
| 4. She had him stay inside for the rest of the week. | She strongly insisted that he stay inside for the rest of the week. (2 words) |
| 5. It is a very reliable and economical car, which has a low price tag at the moment. | Considering that/ Given that it is a very economical car, it has a low price tag at the moment. (2 words) |

B3. You are going to read a passage about Professor William Labov and his latest work, “The Atlas of North American English.” Put the following paragraphs in the correct order. There are two extra paragraphs that you will not need to use. (2x5= 10 points)

| | | | | |
|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 1.d | 2.e | 3.c | 4.a | 5.f |
|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|

- A. These days, Labov found, the most extreme dialect change in the country is taking place in the Chicago area. “The ‘eah’ sound, which you hear in ‘happened’—heahppened—is a young, very invasive sound that is rapidly changing a number of other sounds around it,” he said. This so-called “Northern Cities Shift” is spreading toward St. Louis along I-55, transforming the Inland North dialect, which used to be the model for standard American pronunciation. Labov explained that locals in such areas as northern Ohio and Michigan traditionally spoke precise English because they wanted to distinguish themselves from the speakers of Southern dialects in their states—a split that seems to go back to the Civil War. John Kenyon, the pronunciation editor for the second edition of Webster’s, in the thirties, came from northeastern Ohio, and he helped make Inland North the standard American dialect.
- B. While, according to his study, the Canadian language is often considered to be quite flexible, it is not the same as the English which is spoken in America. The Canadian language is stuck right in the middle between the American and British English due to the fact that both variants of the language have had so much influence in Canada. For these reasons, Canadians accept the different pronunciation of the same word in American and British English.
- C. However, New York’s dialect is intensely regional. There is a tiny portion of eastern New Jersey, along the edge of the Hudson, where you can hear Brooklynese, but by the time you’re in Paterson you’re well into what Labov calls the Jersey “nasal system.” You can hear Brooklynese spoken in parts of New Orleans and Cincinnati, Labov added, the legacy of the New York bankers who moved to those cities in the nineteenth century to finance the cotton trade.
- D. Professor William Labov is to American dialect what Lewis and Clark are to American geography. He’s the pathfinder. Labov’s new work, which is called “The Atlas of North American English,” constitutes the first coast-to-coast charting of all the major dialects spoken in the continental United States and Canada.
- E. Labov, who is seventy-seven, is the director of the linguistics lab at the University of Pennsylvania. At N.Y.U., he was asked a lot of questions about the local dialect, commonly known as Brooklynese. Its three most prominent features are the raised “a” in words like “past” (peahst), the “aw” sound in words like “coffee” (cawfee), and, of course, the dropped “r” in words like “water” (watta).
- F. What causes dialects to change? Not television, Labov said. The people he calls “extreme speakers”—those who have the greatest linguistic influence on others—tend to be visible local people: “politicians, Realtors, bank clerks.” But isn’t slang a bottom-up phenomenon? “Slang is just the paint on the hood of the car,” Labov said. “Most of the important changes in American speech are not happening at the level of grammar or language—which used to be the case—but at the level of sound itself.”
- G. According to linguists the language spoken in the Northwest of the U.S is influenced by Indian Tribes, and the type of work done in this region. The Northwest language is dotted with words derived from fishing and logging and sailing. Does “Geoduck” ring a bell? How about a “muckety-muck?” You probably won’t hear those words outside the Northwest.

