

Lifelong learning and the growing trend in short courses

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There has certainly been a rise in the popularity of short courses lately, this may be due to people with the means and time to take up studying during the Covid-19 lockdown. But perhaps there is more to the phenomenon than being a simple pass time. The demand for degrees is still very high in the country amongst matriculants and adults, however, short courses appeal greatly to adult learners seeking to broaden their knowledge and improve their career opportunities, all without carrying the debt of a student loan, paying the fees or dedicating the years required to complete a degree.



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Life has without a doubt become busier and the world is advancing at an incredible rate, so the prospect of bite-size, affordable learning is appealing, especially when it can be easily completed parallel to a job or caring for a family.

Certainly the benefits of short courses go beyond monetary convenience, because they push us towards the mindset of life-long learning, which is proving to be gaining great traction as a development tool in both personal and professional spheres. The more knowledge we have of the world around us the greater our sense of connection, understanding and self-fulfilment.

Many organisations recognise that in order to remain competitive they need their employees to be adaptable and have the knowledge relevant to the advances occurring in the world today and will often seek out employees that can evidently showcase a lifelong learning mindset. Curiosity and a desire to learn more are positive traits in employees because it increases flexibility and broadens the scope for growth within an organisation.

Short courses are an excellent way of demystifying subjects, for the many out there who can't commit to the time a degree takes, but also for those interested in completing a degree and seeking further knowledge on the subject before making the commitment. The great advantage of short courses is that they tend to be more hands-on, for example, a short course introducing web design I came across through Cornerstone Institute in Cape Town, gives students concise information on the basics of web languages and coding and then guides them through the process of building a website, using their newly gained knowledge. This practical exercise can be enlightening for many, without having to go through the vast amount of

theory that comes with a degree. This way people interested in pursuing a subject get an overall idea of what they're getting themselves into when it comes to committing to a certain field. Cornerstone also offers an excellent range of post and undergraduate degrees along with higher certificates and is worth exploring for those interested in lifelong learning, they can be found at www.cornerstone.ac.za

Many higher educational institutions are beginning to include short courses and higher certificates into their organisations as it not only gives more people access to education, but it also increases prospective students. A short course not only introduces a field of knowledge but the institution itself.

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