Introduction

Hi! Welcome to the course, "Learn Any Skill Faster and Better: How to Learn to Code, Play the Piano, Lift Weights, Speak French, Draw, Or Anything Else". I'm Marelisa Fábrega, owner of the blog "Daring to Live Fully" and your course instructor.

This ten-week course will teach you the metaskill of learning how to learn—which is often referred to as life's most important skill. After all, if you learn how to learn you can learn anything faster and more effectively.

The course objective is to teach you a learning system which you'll be able to apply every time you want to learn a new skill, in order to learn it faster and better. The system applies to practically any skill, whether it's a physical skill, like weightlifting, or a mental skill, like coding, because at its core skill development is about learning.

Learning how to learn will allow you to do all of the following:

- Keep abreast of changes in your field and ensure that your knowledge doesn't become outdated.

- Change careers.

- Achieve your goals in any life area: whether it's starting a business; improving your health; keeping your brain active as you get older; learning a new language; learning to play an instrument; and so on.

Do-it-yourself learning has come into vogue recently. A few years ago, Josh Kaufman wrote "The Personal MBA". In it, Kaufman explains that instead of spending thousands of dollars to get an MBA, and taking two years off your life, you can simply create your own MBA by identifying and reading the best business books out there. Then, create a plan of action based on what you read, and apply your newly acquired knowledge in the real world.

Kaufman then wrote another book in which he presented a do-it-yourself approach to learning new skills, "The First 20 Hours: How to Learn Anything. . . Fast". This followed on the heels of Tim Ferriss's self-learning book, "The Four-Hour Chef: The Simple Path to Cooking Like a Pro, Learning Anything, and Living the Good Life".

What these books do is encourage you to take control of your learning.

Although there's been a recent upsurge in the self-learning mentality, this isn't something new. Malcolm Knowles is widely recognized as the father of adult learning theory. He was most active in the 1970s. Here's how he described self-directed learning:

"[A process] in which individuals take the initiative. . . in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes."

Even going back to the 16th century, French philosopher Michel de Montaigne believed that we should each design our own curriculum based not on what others think we should know but based on what we believe would be useful to us.

He advocated that we should ask ourselves questions like the following:

- What do I need to know to be happier?

- What skills do I need to live a better life?

Then, he argued, we should each go out there and learn those things and acquire those skills.

That's what you're going to be able to do by going through this course. Ask yourself: What do I want my life to look like? What skills do I need to make that happen? Then, apply the learning system I'm going to teach you, learn those skills, and make your best life happen.

Today's world is ideal for self-learning. With the internet you have access to all of the following:

- Countless articles and tutorials on any subject you can imagine;
- YouTube videos teaching everything from how to make a French omelette to how to knit a baby blanket;
- Learning platforms like Udemy, Coursera, and Lynda;
- Skype, which allows you to connect with tutors from all over the world; and
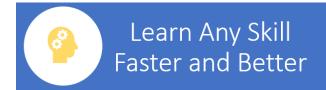- MOOCs: Massive Online Open Courses from top learning institutions, such as Harvard, Stanford, and MIT.

Through Amazon, you can find books teaching any skill you want to learn and have them delivered to your door.

But things get even better: thanks to neuroscience and cognitive psychology, we now have a better understanding of how the brain learns. By applying these new insights, we can now learn faster and better.

The 5 Principles of Learning Faster and More Effectively

In creating this course, I identified five principles of learning faster and more. The five principles are:

1. Personal Autonomy
2. Learn Actively.
3. Create the Right Learning Conditions.

4. Learn Effectively and Practice Deliberately.
5. Experiment.

Let's take a look at these one-by one.

Personal Autonomy

The first principle is personal autonomy. By personal autonomy I mean that you're 100% in charge.

- You choose what to learn.
- You choose your learning goals.
- You choose the resources, techniques, and methods that will allow you to meet your learning goals.
- You're accountable to yourself.
- You determine what's working for you and what isn't (metacognition).
- You choose when and where you learn – you set your schedule.

Learn Actively

The second principle is to learn actively.

- You're going to move from doing to learning, fast.

- It's the opposite of passive learning in which you just take in information. Instead of just seeing, reading, and hearing, you're going to solve problems, practice, and apply what you learn to real life situations. Some passive learning—such as attending lectures and completing reading assignment--is unavoidable. But try to compress this as much as possible and get to doing the real work of learning – practice – as quickly as possible.

- The question is no longer what you know, but what you can do with what you know.

- Dan Coyle, author of "The Talent Code", has the following to say about learning actively: "Our brains evolved to learn by doing things, not by hearing about them. This is one of the reasons that, for a lot of skills, it's much better to spend about two thirds of your time testing yourself on it rather than absorbing it."

Create the Right Learning Conditions

The third principle is to create the right learning conditions. This applies both externally—setting up a learning schedule that works for you and designing an environment for optimal learning---and internally—being motivated, dealing with frustration, overcoming perfectionist tendencies, and so on.

Learn Effectively and Practice Deliberately

The fourth principle is to learn effectively and practice deliberately.

As was indicated previously, the fields of neuroscience and cognitive psychology have made great strides in uncovering the best ways to learn and practice. Apply these best practices when learning.

Experiment

The fifth and last principle is to experiment.

- If there's an explanation you don't understand, look for alternative explanations.

- If you're taking a class and the assigned textbook is incomprehensible, find a better one.

- If you can't solve a problem, try different approaches until you find one that works.

- If you're not sure what to do, create a hypothesis as to what might work and try it out.

- If the learning method you're using isn't working out for you, search for a better one using research and experimentation.

Methodology

Learn Any Skill Faster and Better is comprised of ten modules, spanning two phases. The first is the Planning Stage--which is covered in the first five modules of the course. The second is the Execution Stage, which is covered in the last five modules.

The first thing you'll do is choose a skill that you want to learn, set a goal for what you want to be able to achieve by learning that skill, and create a five-week project that will allow you to achieve your goal. You'll complete the project during the five weeks of the Execution Stage of the course.

This will give you basic proficiency in your chosen skill. Basic proficiency is defined as follows: Get down the fundamentals of a skill, complete a project with those fundamentals, and be able to craft a plan that will allow you to achieve the level of expertise that you desire in said skill.