

# Massive Open On-line Courses

## Using Psychology MOOCs

MOOCs are Massive Open On-line Courses giving people a chance to learn wherever they are although access to the internet is essential. MOOCs can be accessed via a mobile phone or a PC and everything in-between.

MOOCs are relatively new, having been developed in the USA a few years ago, but have been taken up by learners worldwide. The number of learners and courses is increasing exponentially probably because they are so flexible and applicable in many learning settings. Learners in far flung places around the world, without access to the wide range of educational opportunities we all take for granted, can access degree and college level education on a wide range of subjects.

So what does this mean for psychology and U3a in general? Firstly if there is insufficient interest in psychology in your U3A to get a group running then a few members can register for a course and then meet and discuss what they have learnt. The courses themselves have opportunities for discussion groups on line but one of U3A's strengths is the social aspect so a coffee and a chat might be preferable. Sometimes one of the other limiting factors for psychology groups is the lack of someone with a basic knowledge of the subject matter to direct the group or reluctance by group members to research and present a topic to other group members. Using a MOOC could save hours of preparation time reading or even 'stumbling around in the dark'.

There are many MOOC providers covering courses for all ages of learners but for U3A Psychology groups the MOOC providers I would recommend are Edx, Coursera and Futurelearn.

Edx offer a good variety of psychology courses e.g. The Psychology of Criminal Justice and How the Mind Works which includes thinking, reasoning and language.

[https://www.edx.org/course?search\\_query=psychology](https://www.edx.org/course?search_query=psychology)

Coursera offer a sound basic psychology course called 'Introduction to Psychology'. Topics covered include the social mind, memory and mental illness.

<https://www.coursera.org/courses?languages=en&query=psychology>

Futurelearn is wholly owned by the Open University. At present the courses are somewhat limited for psychology although there are many health related courses

which inevitably include references to psychology. One that might be of interest is Babies in Mind: Why the parent's Mind Matters.

<https://www.futurelearn.com/search?utf8=%E2%9C%93&q=psychology>

The member's area of the U3A website has further information. Simply search for MOOCs.

A couple of interesting Youtube videos will tell you more go to:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eW3gMGqcZQc&t=26s>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vnGPohV3eZl>