Python Learners' Co-op

The pitch

Are you interested in learning Python, or improving your skills?

Whether you are:

- starting from scratch,
- looking to finish a previous course,
- self-taught and seeking a cohesive understanding,
- wanting to refresh and confirm existing knowledge

you are invited to be join our $free **Python Learners' Co-op Group**!

We are forming a co-operative group bringing learners come together to learn, discuss, and grow. This group offers:

- *flexible learning*: learn at your own pace, fitting study around your work and other commitments.
- *regular meetings*: join us for café-style meetings where we will discuss progress, tackle problems, clarify materials, encourage each-other, and share insights.
- *collaborative support*: benefit from the encouragement and feedback of fellow learners and experienced mentors recounting real-world applications.

Training by yourself requires significant intrinsic-motivation and only suits some personalities. Most of us benefit from the extra-encouragement of working together with others (but not in lock-step) to boost our chances of success. This group aims to help you achieve a professional-standard, or enjoy Python as a fulfilling hobby, all whilst fostering a supportive learning-environment.

After reading this document, please consider the Guide and register your interest at PythonCoop@DancesWithMice.info

The participants

- *motivated and committed*: ready to invest time and effort to enhance their Python skills and complete the group's season.
- *independent yet collaborative*: capable of studying alone but eager to join group meetings, socialize, and share experiences.
- *supportive and humble*: comfortable asking basic questions and confident in offering help to others.
- *diverse and global*: from various cultural backgrounds and locations around the world, with English as the working language.
- *flexible with time zones*: based in time-zones ranging from the US West Coast through the Pacific, Asia, and Africa, to Europe. If needed, we might organize separate meetings for different time zones.
- *age inclusive*: from high school students to adults, regardless of prior experience.
- *respectful*: agreeing to adhere to the Python Software Foundation Code of Conduct.
- *engaged in the process*: will review and complete the "Guide" as an application process.

The plan

- *choose your personal learning path*: select a training program[me] which aligns with your personal goals and interests
- *flexible study*: study at your own pace and on your own schedule, driven by your own enthusiasm, and working around family and employer commitments
- *regular meetings*: participate in web-conferences (initially weekly) at times and dates chosen by the group
- *mentor support*: access guidance from colleagues and mentors if/when you encounter challenges or need clarification
- *peer encouragement*: benefit from mutual support and encouragement in both social and academic contexts
- *blended-learning approach*: combine structured course-teaching and informal learning methods to enhance your understanding and progress
- *flexible framework*: adjust individual and group plans according to needs and feedback
- *aiming for success*: collaborate with peers and mentors to succeed!

The process

- *group size*: limited to ensure effective learning and interaction
- *course enrolment*: each participant must enrol in a formal course of study (eg a book, an online course) which aligns with his/her learning goals
- *application process*:, please consider the Guide and use it to register your interest at PythonCoop@DancesWithMice.info
- *mentor priority*: applicants who bring-along a mentor (BYOM) will be given priority in the selection process (there is a separate document for Mentors: Mentor's Guide)
- *community engagement*: preference will be given to members of recognized Python User Groups (PUGs) or relevant Internet discussion lists
- *selection process*: applicants will self-select in consultation with myself ("dn")
- *initial meeting*: the first café-style meeting will be used to explain key concepts, assist in choice of courses, determine meeting times and frequency (initially expected to be weekly), and address any other details
- *study and meetings*: participants will engage in individual study in-between, and attend group café-style meetings to discuss progress and share experiences.
- *ongoing process*: the learning process will involve regular review and adjustment, as needed, to ensure continuous improvement and success.
- *goal*: course-completion and success in your Python learning journey!

What will be expected of you as a co-op member?

- *motivation and enthusiasm*: be motivated to learn and apply Python skills actively
- *time commitment*: commit a portion of your week to study and for group participation
- *course enrolment*: enrol in a MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) or formal study program(me) of your choice. (assistance will be available at the initial meeting). This could be a free course or you might pay to also receive certification
- *self-study*: engage in self-directed study, tracking your progress and improving skills
- *active participation*: contribute actively and regularly at the virtual-café meetings, sharing your progress, asking questions, and supporting colleagues

What will be expected of us as a group?

- *constructive support*: we are committed to providing constructive assistance and encouragement to help everyone succeed
- *enhanced learning*: we will complement the content of the formal training courses, adding valuable perspectives and insights
- *supportive environment*: we will strive to create a welcoming and supportive environment where all questions are valued and none considered trivial
- *flexible structure*: unlike traditional study groups, we won't follow a rigid structure of what will be studied or when, but will adapt to our own rates of progress
- *interactive discussions*: we will all engage supportively in two- and multi-way discussions to foster exploration and progress
- *real-world applications*: we will explore the usage, relevance, and practical applications of Python in real-world situations to connect learning with practice

Tool-set

Nothing will be assumed. We will familiarise ourselves with any/all tools and terminology, as we go, for example:

- MOOC = Massively open online course, from Coursera, edX, FutureLearn (etc) (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Massive_open_online_course)
- if unfamiliar with the concept, edX offer a sample course (https://www.edx.org/course/demox)
- BBB = Big Blue Button web-conferencing software (https://bigbluebutton.org/)
  (dn has been facilitating use of BBB since before the COVID-era)
- other, eg GitLab, chat system, Kanban, shared-docs; ie whatever you think useful

Many of such through New Zealand Open Source Society (https://nzoss.nz), and sponsored by CatalystCloud (https://catalystcloud.nz/)

About “dn” (David L Neil)

- uses his initials because David is a popular given-name
- called by many other names/titles/sobriquets!
- irreverent and sometimes zany sense of humor
- drive motivates achievement, achievements motivate drive
- coding Python for more than two-decades, in IT for (much) longer
- leader of Online Group for Python New Zealand
- currently also leader at Auckland Branch of Python New Zealand
- frequent speaker at user group meetings
- post-grad qualifications in Vocational Training
- trains in well-established MOOCs (not Python)
- occasional Guest Lecturer at tertiary institutions
- active as a learner
- researching topics in Cognitive Psychology (how we learn)
  (currently tackling aspects felt to be missing in Internet/distance-learning courses)
- semi-retired(?) from international consulting career in IT
- lived and worked in many different countries, around the world
- multi-lingual, multi-cultural, not multi-taskable – but so good-looking(?)

To participate in our co-op group, please consider the Guide and register your interest with ***dn <PythonCoop@DancesWithMice.info>***