

Roy Cross

Every Cloud has a Silver Lining

2nd March 2022 ~ Narva College

Experiment

Now, please write as much as you can remember of what I've just said in the chat. Notes will do.

Good evening, everyone! My name's Roy Cross, I work for the British Council English for Education Systems team in London, I live in Cambridge, where I also went to university, I was born in Yorkshire and went to secondary school in Kent. I'm married to Boba, who I met in Zagreb when I was working at the university there, and we have two children, who both live in London - Dom, who works for KPMG, and Emily, who's a social worker working with children at risk – and one granddaughter, Ellis, who's just started school and loves it!

We Now Have a Shorter Attention Span Than a Goldfish

The average attention span for the notoriously ill-focused goldfish is nine seconds, but according to a new study from Microsoft Corp., people now generally lose concentration after eight seconds, highlighting the effects of an increasingly digitalized lifestyle on the brain. Researchers in Canada surveyed 2,000 participants and studied the brain activity of 112 others using electroencephalograms (EEGs). Microsoft found that since the year 2000 (or about when the mobile revolution began) the average attention span dropped from 12 seconds to eight seconds. “Heavy multi-screeners find it difficult to filter out irrelevant stimuli — they’re more easily distracted by multiple streams of media,” the report read. On the positive side, the report says our ability to multitask has drastically improved in the mobile age. Microsoft theorized that the changes were a result of the brain’s ability to adapt and change itself over time and a weaker attention span may be a side effect of evolving to a mobile Internet.

***Time*, May 2015, by Kevin McSpadden**

A piece from *The Independent* in December 2017 by Emma Elsworthy is slightly more encouraging, especially for someone with a ninety-minute slot for his talk

The average British person has an average attention span of just 14 minutes, new research has found. According to the data, while watching television the average adult loses concentration – usually to look at a mobile device – after just seven minutes. Finance related meetings or conversations only keep our attention for 10 minutes. Listening to someone who is moaning, or who is gossiping about a complete stranger, leads to most of us tuning out after six minutes. And, alarmingly, motorists lose focus on where they are and drive on ‘auto-pilot’ just 10 minutes into a journey. The study found concentration is a struggle for many of us – with four in 10 admitting they have a particularly short attention span. Stacey Stothard of Skipton Building Society, which carried out the research, said: “As we all lead busy lives, our attention spans only allow us to think about things in the short term, not the long term. So it is sometimes hard to see beyond your next cup of tea or weekly shop”. The poll also found when in a meeting, workers are unable to focus on what is being said for longer than 13 minutes, before they zone out (and) on a call with a client or customers, employees start getting bored and as a result read emails or ‘doodle’ just seven minutes in.

Recognise this film? Answers in the chat, please.



Or this one? Answers in the chat, please.



I'm going to talk about three silver linings to the pandemic cloud.

- the PRELIM 1 and PRELIM 2 projects, both – alas! – Estonia-free zones
- the TeachingEnglish site
- my own daily Free Resources message

But first, I'm going to talk briefly about why no-one should ever lecture for sixty minutes

Hope this works ...

<https://www.lrb.co.uk/podcasts-and-videos/podcasts/the-lrb-podcast/the-guatemalan-coup>

Silver lining 1: PRELIM 2

A partnership between **IATEFL**, **English UK** and the **British Council** which establishes partnerships between the university and school members of English UK in the UK and English teachers' associations all round the world – sixty of them this time round, including both Latvia and Lithuania but not the best Baltic country, Estonia!

Silver lining 2: TeachingEnglish

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/>

Silver lining 3: 'Free Resources'

<https://roycross.blog/>