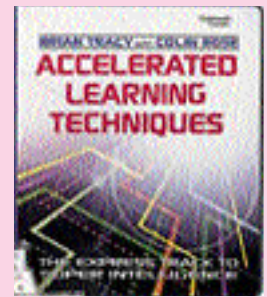


Accelerated Learning

By Colin Rose and Brian Tracy
Simon & Schuster, 1995



Overview

This package is a combination of six cassette tapes along with a workbook and other handouts. Colin Rose is a British expert on accelerated learning techniques and Brian Tracy is a well-known U.S. peak performance coach. According to Rose and Tracy, intelligence is not fixed, it is like a muscle that can be developed, and learning how to learn is the key. The authors cite several examples where corporations have successfully used these techniques to improve their employees learning capacity. For example, one major telephone company cut their training in half with some of the accelerated learning techniques described in this package.

Key ideas

All information enters the brain through one of the five senses. The majority of this information processing is through touch (kinesthetic), sight (visual) or sound (auditory), and most people rely more heavily on one of these methods, (kinesthetic- 40%, visual- 35%, auditory-25%). It is best to use all three if possible (multi-sensory learning). For example you could read the learning material out loud (auditory), view graphic images related to the topic (visual) and feel actual samples of a related item (kinesthetic).

Professor Howard Gardner of Harvard has identified seven intelligences, or aptitudes. These include: Linguistic intelligence, Math and logical intelligence, Visual/spatial intelligence, Musical intelli-

gence, Interpersonal intelligence, Interpersonal intelligence, and Bodily intelligence. Unfortunately, traditional education only uses a few of the. Gardner recommends using at least two to three of them whenever possible to maximize learning.

Effective reading

Each time you read, use a different color highlighter to go over the main ideas. Add question marks, exclamation points and other markers to help you process the information easier.

Occasionally try reading the material dramatically to help remember it or summarize it out loud in your own words.

Think about the material just before bed to help your subconscious act on it while you sleep.

Write key ideas on post-it notes and lay them out in order, or devise some other way of recording the key ideas.

Paraphrase any notes in your own words- this requires more concentration and can help you memorize the material better.

Use of a buddy system- get a partner and discuss, debate and defend the material from various points of view.

Get the big picture first- think about what will you be able to do differently when you learn this material? How will you benefit?

Browse the material- read the author's bio, write out what you already know about the subject. What would you like to learn more about? Do you have any other questions?

Make a mind map diagram of the key points. Write the main idea in the center of the diagram and connect all of the related concepts.

Review the notes several times- within 24 hours, again within a week, again within a month.

Apply the material on a daily basis if possible. Test, practice and use the material in your everyday activities.

Mental rehearsal- build a full and detailed picture of yourself performing the skill. Use of roll play with another person to "lock in" the skills.

Use the material independently and away from the learning site to make sure that you have mastered it.

Use a learning log- keep a record of keywords, thoughts about the learning process, etc.

Realize that success often comes when you are able to move beyond your comfort zone.

Speed reading techniques

One rapid reading technique is to read several words together in a group instead of each word individually. Start reading two to three words from the edge since your peripheral vision will pick up the additional words.

Sweep with your hand across and down the page at a steady speed, use a pencil to keep your place.

Scan read the first chapter in three minutes to find the main ideas and decide if the material is really relevant to your needs. If so, continue skim reading the book for about 15 seconds per page and mark the main ideas and questions.

Force yourself to read rapidly for a full 20 minutes to develop the skills necessary.

Get an overview of the author, table of contents, structure, etc. Write down what you already know about this topic before you start reading. Set up questions for yourself- what are the main ideas? What is the supporting evidence? Are the facts up to date? What's new about this? What can I really use?

Memory skills

Realize that it is possible for an average person to memorize incredible amounts of information. A guy with an average intelligence and IQ was able to memorize an entire page of the Los Angeles phone book. Eventually he memorized the entire white pages and could match names with numbers and vice versa.

Information needs to be repeated or used to transfer it from short-term to long-term memory. Practice the ability to form associations between new and old data. For example- if you meet a Robert, try to match part of his appearance to another Robert that you already know.

Use frequent beginnings and endings to your learning sessions (ideally with many short sessions) since people generally remember the most from the beginning and ending of a presentation or study session.

Think about how you would present this information to a group. How would you write up this material for a handout to give to students? How would you write an article with this material, using a new viewpoint? How would you reorganize this material for best results or impact?

Try to link items to a funny and unusual things. Add action if possible- seeing the item you are trying to memorize flying through space, etc.

Review the material frequently after you have learned it: once again within 24 hours, again within a week, and again within a month.

Certain types of music (classical) helps you relax while learning and may actually help retention of the material.

Memory flashing- take notes and try to re-create them from memory. Compare your attempts with the original notes and try again if necessary. Make a determined decision to remember.

Use mind map diagrams of the material. Compress the material into keyword chunks so that eventually one word will trigger off the memory of the whole paragraph.

Mnemonic devices- the use of first letters of words to develop a trigger word. For example, if you wanted to memorize the Great Lakes, you could use the word HOMES (Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, Superior) as a way to help memorize them.

Over learning- go beyond the basics so you have a surplus of material to compensate for any loss of memory.

Additional notes from the book:

Calm your mind before learning with the use of deep breathing, classical music, stretching, shaking off tension, etc.

Organize the study area with inspiring quotes, photos or drawings of the rewards of learning, etc.

Critical success factor- focusing on the most valuable subjects first - fundamental core skills. This is mentioned more below in the section on effective reading.

Bring as much interest and enthusiasm as possible to the learning experience. Develop clear and intense goals. Verbalize, visualize and

emotionalize your learning goal as if they were already accomplished.

Use affirmations to help focus on the learning experience. They should be positive, personal and present-tense. Examples: "I learn any subject easily," "My job is more secure with my expanded learning capacity."

Explore the information from different angles using the techniques that are best suited to you. For example, you might read it out loud while thinking of practical applications. Get the big picture first- what will you be able to do differently with this new material? How will you benefit by learning this new material?

Auditory learning- these learners benefit from reading out loud, by telling someone what they just experienced, by remembering jingles and rhymes, by listening to audio cassettes, etc. Ask learners to paraphrase what they have just learned into a tape recorder.
Interview- ask learners to interview people in the organization about some aspect of what they are learning about. Have the learners create mnemonics such as raps, poems, word associations, etc. Most information was transmitted to generation to generation auditorially before the Gutenberg press. When we make our own sounds, several significant areas of our cerebrum are activated.

Visual learning- The human mind is more of an image processor than a word processor. Images are easier to hang onto than words. Here are some ideas: **Course map-** provide people with a pictorial map of the course to give them the "big picture." They could add to it, color it, etc. **Picture language-** use language rich in analogy, metaphor, and imagery to describe concepts, terms and processes. **Real world observations-** ask learners to go and observe how something is done outside the classroom. They have them type their observations into the computer or record in verbal or pictorial form. **Icon job aids-** provide learners with icon job aids or have them create their own.

Intellectual learning- involving the mind to create its own learning. Learning is not the storage of information, but the creation of meaning, knowledge and value by the mind of the learner.

Information retrieval- it's best to teach people how to access information rather than how to merely store it.

Problem solving- it's often better to spend more time exploring problems rather than giving answers.

Conceptual mapping- ask learners to build a map or flowchart out of what they are learning, combining the various components of what they are learning together into an integrated whole. Also- 3D models.

Question creation- give learners answers and have them create the questions Jeopardy-style.

Determining desired goals and outcomes-

1. Talk to a few key people from a number of departments within an organization. Ask them: "From your perspective, what do we need?" Make a quick composite of what they tell you.

2. Revisit these same people with your composite and have them give you their feedback and reactions to it.

3. Other questions- What attitudes, skills, and knowledge will help people perform these tasks successfully? How will we determine how well the goals have been achieved? What end results, accomplishments, and values does this program need to create?

What structures, beliefs, assumptions, practices, cultural habits, and barriers are currently inhibiting the growth of learning and creativity in the organization? How can we remove, reduce, isolate, or get around these? What benefits can accelerated learning bring to the organization economically, culturally, and humanly?

Four-Phase Learning (for teachers)

Preparation- The goal is to arouse learners' interest, give them posi-

tive feelings about the forthcoming learning experience, and put them into an optimal state for learning, remove learning barriers such as no sense or personal benefit, embarrassment, boredom, distractions, etc. Be sure to include: meaningful goals, calm fears, remove barriers, arouse curiosity & questions, get people involved from the start.

Presentation- The goal is to help the learners encounter the new material in ways that are interesting, enjoyable, relevant, multisensory and appeal to all learning styles. Be sure to include: pretests, whole brain & body involvement, colorful props, team-based projects, real-world learning experiences, problem-solving exercises.

Practice-The goal is to help learners integrate and incorporate the new knowledge or skill in a variety of ways. Be sure to include: trial/feedback/reflection/retrial, action learning exercises, teach-backs, etc.

Performance- The goal is to help learners apply and extend their new knowledge or skill on the job so that the learning sticks and the performance continually improves. Be sure to include: real-world applications, action plans, reinforcement activities, on-going coaching, performance evaluation and feedback, etc.

Positive suggestions-

After you master this material, you'll be able to...

You'll find this fun and interesting.

This is going to be extremely valuable for you.

You'll love what you will be able to do with this.

I know that you are going to be successful in learning this because we've seen people like you master this material before quite easily.

Avoid negative suggestions, such as: We have a ton of material to cover; this is a complex subject; I know this is boring, but stay with it; If you don't learn this you won't have a job; You have to remember all 8 of these steps; This may not make sense to you, but try to

learn it.

Music and memory are physiologically connected in the brain. The Brahman priests or India used rhythm and music to memorize volumes of Vedic texts. the Iliad and Odyssey of Homer were poems. Benefits of music- it humanizes and energizes the learning experience; relaxes the brain and creates positive feelings and associations for the learner.

Uses of music- as a prelude to learning while people arrive, during breaks, include with presentations- during stories, dramatic readings, demonstrations, etc. During the wrap-up and exit.

Question Party-

Put the questions on cards and create a game- Hot potato, etc.; ask learners to post their questions they have about the learning material. During a break, have them pick off those that they can answer. Anything leftover can be answered by the facilitator.

Games-

They should teach people how to think, access information, react, understand, grow, create real-world value for themselves and their organization on a continuing basis. They should be as enjoyable and engaging as possible without being silly or superficial. (See handout for specific games).

Stories-

From ancient times, stories have been used. They are one of the best methods you could use to make the abstract concrete and memorable. They can be used to illustrate: How a technique or methodology has been successfully (or unsuccessfully) applied. How an order is processed through the system. How various manufacturing processes work.

Body language- facial expressions, exaggerated gestures and bodily movement can give people a concrete picture of what you are talking

about.

End result imagery- Have learners sit and imagine a perfect result to a challenge (sales reps could imagine a perfect sales call). After doing the imagery, ask everyone to talk with a partner about their experience and what they learned from it.

Other issues mentioned by Tracy & Rose:

Lighting- Exposure to natural lighting has a positive effect on human health and emotional well-being.

Fragrance (aromatherapy)- It can have a positive effect on learning.

Priorities- start by asking: what activities might the learners engage in that will get them thoroughly involved in the learning? Only then ask: What presentations and materials will I need to support these activities?

