Accelerated Learning Techniques for Students

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Introduction

Congratulations! If you are reading this manual, then you have taken the first steps towards mastering any subject or skill that you want to master. How can I make such a bold claim? Because this manual will provide you with an in-depth introduction to accelerated learning techniques. These incredible techniques will teach you how to understand new information quickly and easily and how to retain that information better than ever before.

In today’s rapidly changing technological society, learning how to learn is one of the most valuable skills you can have. We have entered the information age where knowledge is king. The faster and easier you can gain that knowledge, the more successful you will be.

Luckily, you are already an incredibly efficient learner. Consider all the things that you have learned outside of a formal classroom setting. You have learned how to walk, talk, swim, ride a bike, play various sports, drive a car, use a computer, cook a meal, … The list goes on and on. Every one of these tasks is challenging and difficult, yet you are most likely extremely proficient at each one.

Almost everything you have learned was informally through exploration. You learned through fun, play, conversation, and interactions with others. Informal learning is natural and fun - just ask any child. The problem is that formal classroom learning doesn't come naturally for many people. To make matters worse, most teachers have an unconscious tendency to teach using their preferred learning style. If their preferred learning style doesn't match yours, there is a good chance you will find learning from them to be challenging.

Research shows that the current teaching methods used at most high schools and universities are not effective for how the brain works. Classroom learning (in its present incarnation) usually only works for a small number of students. For many people, their experience with formal learning has caused them to question their ability to learn. In one
study, 82% of children entering the school system at age 5 or 6 had a positive self image of their ability to learn. By the time these children reached 16 years old, that positive rating had dropped dramatically to 18%. This means that less than one in five students leaving high school have a positive self image of their ability to learn.

If you have previously questioned your learning abilities, I hope that this manual changes your mind. As stated previously, you are already an incredibly efficient learner. In fact, your brain is a supercomputer. Unfortunately, you were not given the instruction manual on how to efficiently use this incredible computer. Well, here it is. This instruction manual describes techniques that will help you unlock the amazing potential of your brain. Let the adventure begin.
Your Amazing Brain

Accelerated learning techniques take into account what we know about how the brain works in order to learn faster and more efficiently. It therefore makes sense to spend some time learning about your amazing brain. According to neurologist Paul Mclean, our brain can be considered to be three brains in one, what he referred to as the “triune brain”. As shown in the figure below, the triune brain consists of the brain stem, the limbic system, and the neocortex. Let's take a quick look at what each of these three brains does and the implications for learning.

The Brain Stem or Reptilian Brain

The brain stem is located at the base of your skull. It is the part of the brain that we have in common with lower life forms such as reptiles, hence it is also known as the reptilian brain. This part of the brain is responsible for survival and our basic vital life functions. The brain stem controls autonomic bodily functions such as breathing and heartbeat, as well as instinctive behavior such as the fight or flight response. When the reptilian brain dominates, such as when we feel threatened or scared, we have very little access to our higher brain functions.
**The Limbic System or the Mammalian Brain**

The limbic system is the part of the brain that we have in common with other mammals, hence it is also called the mammalian brain. This part of our brain is responsible for more complex brain functions such as regulation of the immune and hormone systems, biorhythms, sexuality, feelings, and emotions. (The limbic system is also known as the emotional brain.) The limbic system also controls an important part of our long-term memory storage.

The fact that the limbic system controls both the emotions and long-term memory storage has important implications for learning and memory. Things that involve very strong emotions are very well remembered. Emotionally rich events that occurred many years ago are often recalled in much greater detail than mundane events that happened recently. For example, you probably remember your first kiss more vividly than what you had for dinner two weeks ago.

The limbic system also acts as a kind of switchboard which analyzes incoming information for emotional significance. If we are worried, stressed, insecure, or anxious, incoming information is not fully available to our higher intelligences. Our higher brain functions are virtually shut down when we experience stress and/or physical or emotional danger. Simply put, stress inhibits learning. Positive emotions such as fun and enjoyment are therefore extremely important in the learning process.

**The Neocortex or Thinking Brain**

The neocortex or thinking brain is the part of the brain that makes us most human. The neocortex controls all of our higher intelligences. It is responsible for critical thinking, reasoning, purposeful behavior, language, and our ability to conceive abstractly. The neocortex itself is divided into separate lobes for speech, vision, hearing, and touch. This means that information from our senses is sent to different areas of our brain. We create stronger and more permanent memories when we store the information using all of our senses.
The Left and Right Hemispheres

Our triune brain can be considered to be split into two halves: the right hemisphere and the left hemisphere. You have probably heard people referred to as either “right brained” or “left brained”. The left brain is the linear, logical and rational brain. It is responsible for language and verbal skills, mathematical processes, linear thinking, and logical thoughts. People who are left brained are usually good at linear thinking and prefer a sequential approach to learning that includes a slow, step-by-step build up of information. The right brain is the random, intuitive, and creative brain. It is responsible for feelings, creativity, imagination, and random unordered thinking. People who are right brained are usually good at visualizing and prefer a more global approach to learning that starts with the big picture.

One of the major goals of accelerated learning is to bring more of the recessive side of your brain into play. When you incorporate both sides of your brain into the learning process, you will learn faster and remember more of what you have learned. As an example, consider how many songs in which you know the lyrics by heart. Did you consciously try to learn the lyrics to all of those songs? My guess is that less than 20% of the songs you know by heart were through conscious effort on your part. Personally, I still know the lyrics to songs that my mom used to play on the record player more than 30 years ago.

Music is such an effective way of learning because it involves the whole brain. Your left brain is attending to the words while your right brain is processing the melody. In addition, your emotional/limbic system is engaged. The proper use of music is an extremely effective component of accelerated learning.

The Four Kinds of Brain Waves

Your brain works by sending a complicated series of electrical impulses between neurons. The electrical activity in the brain, also known as brain waves, can be measured by an electroencephalogram machine (EEG) which measures the voltage output in cycles per second (Hertz or Hz). The results of EEG studies have shown that there are four different kinds of brain waves (see figure below).
**Beta:** these are the fastest of the brain waves and are associated with conscious activity. This is the state in which we spend most of our lives.

**Alpha:** these brain waves are associated with being fully awake but relaxed. The alpha state is a state of relaxed alertness. Studies have shown that the alpha state is the optimal state for learning new information.

**Theta:** these brain waves are associated with the early stages of sleep and deep meditation. Recent research has shown that memories are processed and stored while we are in the theta state.

**Delta:** these are the slowest of the brain waves and are associated with very deep sleep.

Many people rarely consider their state of mind before they approach a learning situation. However, getting in the right state of mind – the alpha state – is the first and most important step in the accelerated learning process. You need to get your brain on the right wavelength, literally!
The 6 Steps of Accelerated Learning

Now that we know a bit about how the brain works, let’s look at how accelerated learning uses the brain for optimal learning. This section offers a very brief introduction to the six steps of accelerated learning. Following this section, we will look at each of the six steps in more detail.

1) Mindset to Positive

The most important thing you can do before beginning any task or project is to adopt a positive attitude. This is especially true of learning. If you begin a learning project or study session with a negative attitude, you are setting yourself up to fail. The first step of accelerated learning is creating a positive, confident, and resourceful state of mind. This also includes creating a relaxing learning environment.

2) Acquire the Information

Research performed by experts in Neurolinguistic Programming (or NLP) has identified three distinct learning and communication styles: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. Although we use all three learning styles when taking in new information, people generally prefer one learning style over the other two. When we take in information using our preferred learning style, we tend to learn it faster and easier. The second step of accelerated learning is acquiring the information using the learning style or styles that work best for you.

3) Search out the Meaning

Once we take in the new information, the next step in is to explore what you have just learned using your multiple intelligences. If we want to really learn something and commit that knowledge in to our long-term memory, we must thoroughly explore the subject matter and turn facts into meaning. The purpose of this third step is to explore and interpret the facts we've just learned. The more personal we can make the information, the faster and easier we learn it.
4) **Trigger the Memory**

Learning new information does us no good if we cannot recall the information and put it to use. The fourth step of accelerated learning is to make sure that the subject matter is firmly planted into our long-term memory. In this step, we make a deliberate effort to remember the information using a variety of practical and easy to implement memory techniques.

5) **Exhibit What You Know**

In the fifth step, you demonstrate exactly what you have learned to yourself and to others. It is one thing to learn information, but it is another thing to actually use what you have just learned. You take your knowledge out of the theoretical realm and into the practical. In this step, you are showing that the knowledge is now yours and you own it.

6) **Reflect on How You Learned**

The final step of accelerated learning is to review the entire learning process. The purpose is to reflect not on what you learned but on how you learned. Learning how to learn is an ongoing process that takes practice and revision. The goal of this last step is to reflect on how you learned so that you can improve it the next time around.

The six steps of the accelerated learning process can be remembered with the acronym **MASTER**: **M**indset to positive, **A**cquire the information, **S**earch out the meaning, **T**rigger the memory, **E**xhibit what you know, and **R**eflect on how you learned.
Step 1: The Right State of Mind
(Mindset to Positive)

Most people do not prepare to learn, they just sit down and study. Most people also only
learn a small fraction of what they are capable of learning. The first step of the
accelerated learning process, getting in the right state of mind, is extremely important. In
fact, preparing to learn is the single most important step in accelerated learning. Spending
just 5 to 10 minutes preparing your mind and your study space can double your learning,
even if you implement none of the other steps.

As we discussed earlier, our higher brain functions such as reasoning and logical thinking
are virtually shut down if we are experiencing stress and physical or emotional danger. In
general, any negative emotions will inhibit our learning. The ideal state to be for learning
is a relaxed, confident and resourceful state of mind. We want our brains to be in a state
of relaxed alertness corresponding to alpha brain waves.

Below are the six techniques that you can use before you begin studying to make sure
that your brain and physical surroundings are in the optimal state for learning.

1) Get into Alpha State

Take a few minutes to relax and let go of the worries of the day. Do not begin studying if
you are stressed, upset, or feeling any negative emotions. It is better to spend the time
changing your mental and emotional state than trying to learn while in a non-optimal
state of mind. There are many different relaxation techniques that you can use. One
simple technique is to sit up straight, close your eyes, take several deep breaths, and think
about a peaceful place where you feel at ease. Continue to breathe deeply and visualize
your peaceful place until you feel your negative emotions begin to wash away.
Remember that the alpha brain wave state, where you are relaxed and yet alert, is the
optimal state for learning.
2) Listen to Classical Music (Baroque)

Another way to induce relaxation is through the use of classical music, or more specifically, Baroque music. Numerous studies have shown that listening to Baroque music can have a positive impact on your ability to learn and retain information. Music by composers such as Vivaldi, Handel, Bach, Corelli, Pachabel, and Telamon promote a feeling of calm and relaxation (the music should be listened to at low volume). Baroque music helps to induce the relaxed, alert, and resourceful state of mind that is most useful for learning.

3) Prepare your Learning Space

Take time to establish a quiet and relaxing study place in your house. If possible, it should not be a place that is used for multiple purposes such as the kitchen table. Ideally, you want to create a space that is only used for studying. This will anchor your subconscious mind so that it knows that every time you are in this space, you will be studying.

Once you have established a study place, spend the time to create your optimal learning environment. Make sure you have a comfortable chair (with lumbar support) and good lighting (natural light is better than artificial lighting). Place frequently used items such as paper, pencils, books, highlighters, and index cards so they are within easy reach. Make the surroundings as relaxing and uplifting as possible. This might include having motivational posters, flowers, plants, or hanging positive messages around your workspace. You want your workspace to create a feeling of calm and relaxation.

4) Create Specific Goals and Learning Objectives

Think about what you want to get out of the study session. You want to have a clear vision of exactly what goal you want to achieve before you begin. Think about it this way, you can’t hit a target that you can’t see. Your learning goal should be a specific and measurable target. Rather than saying “I will study math for a while”, you should say, “I will read 15 pages in my math textbook and then finish five math problems.” Once you have accomplished your goal, don’t forget to celebrate your success. Choose a specific
reward for completing your targeted learning goal. The reward could be as simple as calling a friend, watching a favorite TV show, having a tasty dessert, or even going for a walk. Whatever the reward is, get into the habit of noticing and celebrating your small triumphs. You can even keep a journal of your successes and watch as your list grows.

5) WIIFM – What’s In It For Me?

People are rarely motivated to do something they do not see as relevant to their own lives. This is also true of studying and learning new material. You can train your brain to be motivated by leading it to think about the positive impact of your learning. Ask yourself questions such as “Why is this subject important?”, “Why do I need to learn this?”, “How can I use this information in my everyday life?”, “How will learning this improve my life?”, and “What are some of the advantages of learning this?”. The more motivated you are to learn, the more enjoyable the process will be and the faster you will learn.

6) Believe You Can Do It

To paraphrase a famous quote by Henry Ford: “Whether you think you can, or whether you think you can’t, either way, you are usually right.” Your chances for success are dramatically increased if you believe that you are going to succeed. This is especially true of learning. Believe in yourself and think positively about your ability to learn. Imagine how great it will feel once you have successfully learned the material. Say positive affirmations out loud or silently in to yourself. Some examples of positive affirmations include “I learn anything easily and effortlessly.”, “I always get better with practice.”, “I love to learn.”, “My brain is powerful and capable of learning anything.”.
Step 2: Acquire the Information

Start With an Overview

The second step of the accelerated learning process is acquiring the new information. This begins with getting an overview. Before you tackle a new learning project, spend a few minutes browsing through the material you will be reading. Make a mental note of chapter headings, bolded text, pictures, and other information that stands out on the page. Your goal is to give your brain the big picture of what you will be learning, an overview of the entire project. This is analogous to looking at a picture of a completed puzzle before you start to assemble the pieces.

After you skim through the material, take some time to jot down what you already know about the subject. It is rare to approach a new subject with no prior knowledge whatsoever. By briefly noting what you already know before you begin, you will highlight any gaps in your knowledge. Your brain will then be alert for information that fills in those gaps. In addition, write down any questions you have about the subject. If you are doing a reading assignment and have questions to answer on that reading, read those questions first. When you come across the answers in the reading, they will literally jump out of the page at you.

Visual, Auditory, and Kinesthetic Learning Styles

Although we are constantly taking in information using all five of our senses, there are three main senses we use for learning. These correspond to the three styles of learning: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. These different learning styles are described below.

Visual learners learn best through seeing. They enjoy pictures, diagrams, demonstrations, and watching videos. Visual learners pay close attention to a speaker’s body language and facial expressions. They find it easier to remember things they see than things they hear. They are generally not distracted by noise, tend to like art more than music, prefer reading for themselves rather than being read to, and tend to memorize by visual association.
Auditory learners learn best through hearing. They enjoy audio tapes, discussions, and verbal instructions. Auditory learners would rather listen to material presented in lecture than read the material in a textbook. They find it easier to remember things they hear than things they see. They usually enjoy reading aloud, tend to move their lips while reading, tend to like music more than art, and are frequently eloquent speakers.

Kinesthetic learners learn best by doing. They enjoy manipulating, moving, touching, and hands-on experiences where they can be directly involved. They learn through movement and understand things better when they act them out. Kinesthetic learners find it easier to remember things when they are being physically active. They are usually good at sports, tend to gesture a lot while talking, and often can't sit still for long periods of time.

Although everyone uses all three learning styles, people generally prefer one learning style to the other two. When you acquire information using your preferred learning style, you will learn faster and remember more. There are numerous free tests available online to help you determine your preferred learning style.

As a student, you may not have control over how the material is presented to you. However, you can choose how to adapt the information in a way that is suitable to your preferred learning style. Listed below are several techniques that can be used for each of the three different learning modalities.

Visual Strategies

The best visual learning strategy, and in fact one of the most useful of all learning techniques, is the use of the learning map. Learning maps, also known as mind maps, were created by Tony Buzan. A learning map is a visual representation of a subject where the connections between different topics can be easily seen. An example of a learning map is shown on page 31.

To create a learning map, start with the main topic centered in the middle of the page (turn the page horizontally to maximum space). Topics are represented using keywords,
phrases, and/or pictures. Branch out from the center for each key point, connecting related topics to the main one. You can build out from each branch to add additional details. As you create branches and sub-branches, underline words and use bold letters. Use symbols, bright colors, pictures, and other images to make important words jump off the page. Be creative and develop your own style. The more you practice using mind maps, the better you will get at creating them. The mind maps you have created then serve as excellent tools for reviewing and/or studying.

Here are some additional strategies for visual learners:

- Sit where you have a clear view of your teacher when they are speaking.
- Take detailed notes using lots of color.
- Use a highlighter while reading.
- Summarize material using charts, graphs and diagrams.
- Use multimedia such as computer animations and videos.
- Visualize and create a mental picture of what you are learning.

**Auditory Learners**

One of the best learning strategies in general is cooperative learning. This is especially useful for auditory learners. Find a study buddy or study group with whom you can discuss your ideas and share what you are learning. Take turns explaining the material to each other. If you can't explain what you have learned to someone else, you don't really understand it. After you have finished learning a topic, quiz each other to review the material. In addition to being a useful learning strategy, studying with another person is often more enjoyable.

Some additional strategies for auditory learners include:

- Ask lots of questions during class.
- Actively participate in all class discussions.
- Study in a quiet place away from verbal distractions.
• Create musical jingles and mnemonics when memorizing material.
• Read material out loud (the more dramatic the better).
• Use a tape recorder to summarize your notes and listen to them in the car.
• Make frequent use of verbal analogies.

**Kinesthetic Learners**

The key for kinesthetic learners is active, physical involvement during the learning process. Some learning strategies that kinesthetic learners can incorporate include:

• Take notes in class and then rewrite your notes.
• Read the textbook.
• Put a checkmark at the end of each paragraph or page to show that you understand the material.
• Make notes on index cards or post-its and arrange in a logical sequence.
• Walk around while you read or listen to audio tapes.
• Take frequent study breaks.
• Chew gum while studying.

Experiment with the above techniques to see which work well for you. It is best to use a combination of techniques when learning any subject. Because our brain stores visual, auditory, and kinesthetic information in different places within the brain, the more senses we use, the better the information will be stored in our long-term memory. Combining techniques can be as simple as reading and visualizing the material (visual), recording and listening to a summary of the what you have learned (auditory), and writing out the major points on index cards and arranging them into a logical sequence (kinesthetic).
Step 3: Search Out The Meaning

As you probably know from experience, the knowledge that you acquire through first exposure is usually not complete. The third step of the accelerated learning process is to take the information you have acquired and turn this surface knowledge into a deeper understanding of the material. This requires that we thoroughly explore the subject and make personal meaning of what we have learned. Personal meaning is important because we tend to remember what makes sense to us personally and forget those things we deem as irrelevant. When we search out the meaning, we play with and explore the subject using a combination of our different intelligences. This is the key to deepening and retaining knowledge.

In his ground-breaking book *Frames of Mind*, Harvard professor of education Howard Gardner describes his “Theory of Multiple Intelligences”. This theory states that intelligence is not a fixed quantity that can be described by a single number such as IQ. Intelligence is actually a set of skills that can be improved with use. Howard Gardner describes intelligence as “an ability to solve a problem or fashion a product that is valued in one or more cultural settings.” In *Frames of Mind*, Dr. Gardner describes seven distinct intelligences. In 1996, he added an eighth intelligence (naturalistic intelligence) to the original list of seven. The eight intelligences are described below:

*Linguistic/Verbal Intelligence*: the ability to communicate using words. People with high linguistic intelligence speak fluently and write well. They usually learn well from books, like to write things down in their own words, have an excellent vocabulary, and are good at explaining things to others.

*Logical/Mathematical Intelligence*: the ability to calculate and think in a logical step-by-step manner. People with high logical intelligence are good with systems and numbers. They usually like to solve problems and puzzles, arrange tasks in a sensible order, and are good at recognizing patterns and relationships between things.
**Visual/Spatial Intelligence:** the ability to visualize and think in pictures. People with a high visual intelligence are good at imagining future results in their mind’s eye. They usually enjoy learning from films and videotapes, have a good sense of direction, and often see things that others don't notice.

**Musical Intelligence:** the ability to create and interpret music. People with a high musical intelligence have a good sense of rhythm and a deep appreciation for music. They often sing well, play a musical instrument, easily retain song lyrics, and enjoy musical performances as well as natural sounds such as ocean waves.

**Bodily/Kinesthetic Intelligence:** the ability to present ideas and solve problems using bodily skills. People with a high bodily intelligence are coordinated and have excellent manual dexterity. They often play sports, do arts and crafts, enjoy hands-on learning, and take things apart to figure out how they work.

**Interpersonal Intelligence:** the ability to relate well and work effectively with others. People with a high interpersonal intelligence are sensitive to the moods of others and are good at reading people's emotions. They often make people feel comfortable and at ease, get involved in community activities and clubs, enjoy working with others, and are good at displaying empathy and understanding.

**Intrapersonal Intelligence:** the ability to understand and control one's own behavior and innermost feelings. People with a high intrapersonal intelligence are independent and skilled at self analysis and reflection. They often appreciate quiet and privacy while working, set goals for their future, and can easily explain their decisions to others.

**Naturalistic Intelligence:** the ability to sense patterns in and make connections to the natural world. People with a high naturalistic intelligence have a strong sensitivity to nature and are good at categorizing plants and animals. They are usually keenly aware of their surroundings and enjoy spending time in the outdoors.

Most people tend to be stronger in some of the intelligences than in the others. One of the major problems with our present educational system is that most subjects are taught using only two intelligences: linguistic/verbal and logical/mathematical. If your strengths lie in
one of the other six intelligences, then there is a good chance that you find formal classroom learning to be challenging. The good news, however, is that no matter how the material is presented in class, you get to choose how to explore and play with the subject matter on your own time. Presented below are several different learning strategies you can use for each of the eight intelligences.

**Linguistic/Verbal Intelligence**

- Paraphrase the material and put it in your own words.
- Create a summary of all the important information and read aloud using different emotional tones (angry, happy, surprised, …).
- Write a newsletter or magazine article explaining the subject.

**Logical/Mathematical Intelligence:**

- List the main points in a logical numbered sequence.
- Create a flowchart or timeline.
- Question the validity of what you have just learned. Ask the following questions:
  - “Is this fact or opinion?”
  - “What assumptions are being made?”
  - “What is the evidence for this?”
  - “What is another example or illustration of this?”
  - “What conclusions can I draw from this information?”

**Visual/Spatial Intelligence:**

- Create a learning map.
- Visualize the material in your mind’s eye.
- Create a mental TV documentary on the material.
- Make a poster or video summarizing the subject.
Musical Intelligence:

- Write a song or jingle summarizing the material.
- Listen to classical music while studying.

Bodily/Kinesthetic Intelligence:

- Write notes on index cards and sort them in a logical order.
- Make a model.
- Act out what you are learning.

Interpersonal Intelligence:

- Discuss what you have learned with someone.
- Find someone who knows more than you do and ask them questions.
- Compare your notes with someone.
- Teach the material to a friend.

Intrapersonal Intelligence:

- Reflect on why the subject matters to you and how it fits in with what you already know.
- Read about the background of the people involved.
- Keep a journal recording your thoughts and reactions to what you are learning.

Naturalistic Intelligence:

Naturalistic intelligence is somewhat limited in its usefulness for exploring a subject. However, it is useful for providing an “ecological” check on the social and environmental implications on what you are learning. You can ask yourself the following questions:

“Are there any social or environmental implications to what I am learning? If so, what are they?”

“Can this information be used to help solve any social or environmental issues?”
“How might this information affect future generations?”
“Can I use this information to better understand individuals and/or social behaviors?”
“Does this information guide me to take any action?”

Regardless of which of the eight intelligences is your strongest, you will learn more effectively if you involve multiple intelligences. Ideally, you would use all eight intelligences to explore the material you are learning. Although this may not be possible for all subjects, the more intelligences you can use the better. Experiment with the above strategies and see which ones work well for you. The most important way to use this information about intelligences is to develop your own “learning toolkit” that you draw upon to thoroughly explore any subject.
Step 4: Trigger the Memory

After exploring the subject matter using your multiple intelligences, you now understand the material. The next step in accelerated learning is to make sure that information gets transferred and stored into your long-term memory. What you have learned will do you no good if you can’t remember it. The good news is that your memory is already excellent. You have learned and memorized thousands and thousands of words, facts, images, and other items. The area that many people struggle with is recall.

In order to remember something long-term, that information must make an impression upon you. Passively taking in new information is not effective, you must take action. New information must be acted upon in some way in order to transfer it from your short-term to your long-term memory. Studies have shown that up to 70% of what you learned today can be forgotten within 24 hours if a special effort is not made to remember it. Listed below are ten memory techniques and principles that you can use to improve your long-term memory.

1) Make a Decision to Remember

Many times, we forget new information simply because we never really registered it in the first place. How many times have you met somebody for the first time and forgot their name within a few minutes? This is most likely because you never really registered their name to begin with. Immediately after you take in new information such as somebody's name, make a conscious decision to remember it. The more determined you are, the more likely you will remember. The simple act of consciously deciding to remember something will greatly enhance the probability of remembering it.

2) Association

Our memories work best through association. The key to creating long-term memories is deliberately connecting old information to new information. If you can associate something new with something you already know, you will be much more likely to remember it. This is because we remember things that have meaning for us and associations create meaning. The more associations we can make, the better.
3) **Deliberately Create Multi-Sensory Memories**

It has been said that on average, most people remember:

20% of what they read
30% of what they hear
40% of what they see
50% of what they say
60% of what they do
90% of what they see, hear, say, and do

If you want to create strong, long-lasting memories, make a deliberate effort to involve as many of your senses as possible. Use learning techniques that combine reading, hearing, seeing, saying, and doing. Concentrate your efforts on where your natural abilities lie but don’t forget to involve as many of your senses as possible.

4) **Take Regular Breaks**

The order in which we learn information affects how reliably it will be recalled at a later time. This is known as the recency and primacy effect. This effect states that we remember the most at the beginning and ending of a learning session. This is shown graphically in the figure below. If we want to maximize our learning and keep our recall high, it makes sense to have a lot of beginnings and endings. This means taking frequent breaks. It is much better to break a long study session up into several mini-sessions with breaks in between. In general, you should take a break every 30 – 60 minutes. The break only needs to be a few minutes long, but it should be a complete rest from what you were doing.
5) Organize the Information Meaningfully

We remember information more easily when it is organized than when it is disorganized. When learning a new subject, take the time to paraphrase the information in your own words and then organize it into categories that are meaningful to you. This process of paraphrasing and organizing requires that you really think about and understand the material and will greatly enhance your level of recall.

6) Create a Mnemonic

A mnemonic is a memory device used to remember larger pieces of information. There are many types of mnemonics. The most common type is a word mnemonic in which the first letter of each item in a list is arranged to form a word or phrase. For example, many people remember the colors of the spectrum (Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo, Violet) using the mnemonic ROY G BIV. Another example is “Please Excuse My Dear Aunt Sally”, which is used to remember the order of operations: Parentheses, Exponents, Multiply, Divide, Add, and Subtract.

Another common type of mnemonic is a rhyme mnemonic, in which information is put into the form of a poem or song that rhymes. For example, “I before E, except after C, or when sounding like A, as in neighbor or weigh.”

Another easy way to remember numbers is to make a sentence with the number of letters in each word representing a number. For example, you can remember the first 15 digits of pi, which are 3.14159265358979, by using the following sentence: “Boy I need a drink, alcoholic of course, after the heavy lectures involving quantum mechanics.” This can be very useful for remembering phone numbers, PINs, and important dates.

7) Set it to Music

Music is an extremely useful learning tool. In fact, it is much more powerful than is normally appreciated. In addition to integrating the left and right sides of our brains, it also stimulates the emotional center of our brain. Since emotions are strongly linked to long-term memory, music can be a very powerful memory tool. One effective strategy is to take a well known song, jingle, or TV advertisement and write your own words to the familiar melody.
8) Memory Flashing

Memory flashing is a very simple technique for learning and remembering information. To begin memory flashing, make notes by creating a learning map or brief list of important points. Study the learning map or list for a few minutes and then put it away. Then try to re-create the learning map or list from memory. After you are finished, compare your new map or list to the original. Your brain will quickly notice anything that you missed. Now make a third map or list and again compare with the original. Continue this process until the two maps or lists are the same. By the time the new map or list matches the original, the information will be firmly planted within your brain.

9) Sleep on it

Recent research has shown that long-term memories are stored in our brains while we are in theta state. This occurs during sleep or when we are deeply relaxed. While we sleep, our brains are processing and storing information that we learned during our waking hours. Because of this, it is extremely important to get a good nights sleep if you want to retain the information that you just learned. An excellent learning pattern to adopt is to learn the material in a variety of ways (as we covered before), review the information briefly before you go to bed, get a good nights sleep, and then review the information briefly again in the morning.

10) Review the Material Frequently

The more you review the material, the more you will remember it. As the saying goes, “repetition is the mother of learning”. Research has shown that your recall can be improved by as much as 400% if you briefly review the material after one hour, one day, one week, one month, and six months.

The more you use these memory techniques, the faster your memory will improve. However, it will not happen overnight. Powerful memory requires practice. Continue practicing these techniques and they will eventually become second nature. Once they do, you will truly be amazed at just how powerful your memory is.
**Step 5: Exhibit What You Know**

The fifth step of the accelerated learning process is where you show that you have successfully learned the subject and committed it to memory. You demonstrate to yourself and to others that you truly comprehend the material. By showing that you know, you take your knowledge out of the theoretical realm and into the practical. This can be accomplished by testing yourself to make sure that you understand what you have learned and by practicing so you become confident and fluent with the new material.

**Test Yourself**

Testing yourself should be a straightforward check of your ability. You can use any of the previously discussed learning strategies that have proven to work well for you. Some possibilities include:

- Test yourself with flash cards.
- Explain what you've learned to someone else.
- Reconstruct a learning map or list of important points.
- Review the material out loud to yourself.
- Partner with a study buddy and quiz each other.
- Create a mental movie of what you have learned.

**Practice**

In order to become fluent with new material, you must put it to use. Try to use whatever you have learned within 24 hours of learning it. Look for any occasion to apply it in your daily life. You will be much more likely to commit the information to your long-term memory if you immediately apply it. You cannot learn how to ride a bike by simply reading a book. You have to go out and ride the bike, fall down, pick yourself back up, and then try again. This is true of learning any new skill or subject. You must practice the skill in order to master it. Do you remember how difficult driving was the first few times you tried it? Now, for most of us, driving is second nature.
Similarly, people who are experts in their field of study are experts because they have practiced until the skill or knowledge has become automatic. Many people like to think that superstars like Michael Jordan are great because of some natural inborn talent. What they do not think about are the thousands of hours of practice it took Jordan become a superstar or the many mistakes he made along the way. (Note: Michael Jordan was actually cut from his high school varsity basketball team as a sophomore. This motivated him to spend countless hours practicing on the court.) In Jordan’s own words, “I've missed more than 9000 shots in my career. I've lost almost 300 games. 26 times, I've been trusted to take the game winning shot and missed. I've failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed.”

As you start to apply your new knowledge, remember to be kind to yourself. You are using a new skill and it takes time to become proficient. You will make mistakes so be patient. As Albert Einstein said, “Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new.” Mistakes are not only alright, they are vital to the learning process. They provide us with valuable feedback and clarify areas that we need to explore more thoroughly. As physicist Niels Bohr once stated, “An expert is a person who has made all the mistakes that can be made in a very narrow field.”
Step 6: Reflect on How You Learned

The final step of the accelerated learning process is to reflect back on how you learned. You want to review the entire learning process to see what worked for you and what didn’t work. Learning how you learn best does not happen overnight, it is a continual process of reflection and revision. Evaluating your own learning process is the key to becoming a successful learner. Ask yourself the following questions:

“What went well?”
“What didn’t go well or could have gone better?”
“How can I improve the learning process next time?”
“If I was to learn this material again, what would I do differently?”
“Which learning strategies did I enjoy the most?”
“Which learning strategies were the most useful for me?”
“Which learning strategies were not very useful?”

It is beneficial to keep track of the answers to these questions in a learning log. You can use the learning log to track your progress as you continue to tackle new learning projects. This also gives us a sense of our own progress which is critical to motivation.

As a final note, remember to celebrate your success. Give yourself a pat on the back for completing a learning project. We want learning to be a pleasurable experience so that we continue doing it throughout our entire lives.
Call to Action

Regardless of what you want to be, do, or have, one of the keys to accomplishing any goal is learning what you need to learn. The material presented in this manual will help you do that. The other key, is taking action and doing what you need to do. That part is up to you.

Accelerated learning techniques are only useful if you apply them. I therefore challenge you to set a learning goal for yourself right now. If you are a student, choose your most difficult subject and apply these techniques. If you are working, choose to learn something that will help you excel in your present occupation. (The sad fact is that many people slave away at their jobs year after year and never take the time to become really excellent at what they do. Do not be one of those people.) You can also choose to learn a subject that you've always wanted to learn.

Whatever it is that you choose to learn, take action today. Establish a learning project and demonstrate to yourself that you have the ability to learn and master any subject. You will be amazed at just how brilliant you truly are.

Good luck and happy learning!


6 Steps of Accelerated Learning

(1) Mindset to positive
   - WII-FM
   - BIG picture
   - prepare learning space
   - believe in yourself!
   - note prior knowledge

(2) Acquire the info
   - Acquire the info
   - learning goals

(3) Search out the meaning
   - Search out the meaning
   - personal meaning

(4) Trigger the memory
   - Trigger the memory
   - memory flashing
   - regular breaks
   - review frequently
   - assocation

(5) Exhibit what you know
   - Exhibit what you know
   - application in daily life
   - practice

(6) Reflect on how you learned
   - Reflect on how you learned
   - What went well?
   - What learning strategies did I enjoy most?
   - How can I improve the learning process?

learning log

BIG picture

α state

Verbal-Linguistic
Bodily-Kinesthetic
Visual-Spatial
Musical-Thematic
Interpersonal
Intrapersonal
Naturalistic
Logical-Mathematic