HOW TO TEACH USING ACCELERATED LEARNING METHODOLOGIES

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Abstract

HOW TO TEACH USING ACCELERATED LEARNING METHODOLOGY

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Under the Supervision of Dr. Richard A. Rogers

Accelerated Learning (AL) is a rapidly growing trend in education that started developing since World War II. It manifested itself in a number of accelerated approaches and programs in both adult and high school education in many countries, numerous foreign language courses around the world, and in particular college offerings in the USA. According to the Council for Accelerated Programs' (CAP) data for 2006, for instance, more than 800 U.S. colleges and universities are using an AL approach today, as compared to only about 200 in 2002 (Serdyukov, 2006, p. 36).

This growth becomes understandable in a period characterized by widespread economic, political and social change, massive integration of technological innovations, and soaring growth of information and knowledge in all areas of life. The rapid rate of change creates an increasing demand for fast short-term educational and training programs.

Another rising trend is a growing demand for shorter degree programs, (e.g., three- instead of four-year undergraduate programs). The opportunity to obtain a degree in a short time opens careers that had been previously unavailable and, at the same time, saves the student both time and expense. Adult students have hectic lifestyles due to numerous jobs, family, and social responsibilities; therefore, they cannot participate in conventional college programs intended for young students that extend across many years.

There is concern regarding the quality of learning outcomes of courses delivered in a compressed format. In view of these considerations, there is a need to identify effective AL methodologies and examine its theoretical foundations. Serdyukov argues the following:

- *AL is a specific form of education.*

- *Its main feature is a compressed course format.*

- *It provides the same content and learning outcomes as a traditional semester-long course in a shorter time period (2006, p. 37).*

Consequently, (AL) can be regarded as a specific instructional approach that utilizes a non-conventional, effective methodology. To successfully achieve the planned learning outcomes, both instructors and students should be specially prepared for teaching and learning in this innovative, productive, and quite demanding format. This research paper identifies major principles and aspects of AL methodology that can serve as a platform both for further research in this area and for enhancing student learning productivity in existing college classrooms.

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PREFACE

This seminar paper follows the usual steps of defining a problem, reviewing the literature, and providing conclusions and recommendations. In addition to the review of literature, I chose to complete an Independent Study Project. The project involved a team teaching situation where I was allowed to observe, practice, and perform principles of Accelerated Leaning. Accelerated Learning principles were adapted to the Retail Management Class at Madison Area Technical College (MATC). The purpose of this project was to learn and develop skills, knowledge, and confidence to design curriculum and to teach by utilizing Accelerated Learning and teaching methods.

--LaVonne O'Malley

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Despite the terminology, Accelerated Learning (AL) is not an acceleration of the learning process. "Accelerated Learning is a multi-sensory, brain-compatible teaching and learning methodology. It uses information from brain research to ensure that less time is wasted than in more traditional learning processes" (McKeon, 1995, p. 64-66). "Accelerated Learning is a systematic approach to teaching the whole person, containing specific core elements that, when used together, empower students to learn faster, more effectively and joyfully" (DePorter, 2001, n.p.).

Accelerated Learning has two components. The first component is accelerated programming, which involves compressing or reducing class time. The total hours of effort remain the same during which time students will be involved in small groups and independent projects outside of class. The second component is the use of accelerated teaching methods. These methods are a way of organizing and presenting instruction to reach the various learning and processing styles of the students.

Accelerated Learning methods and techniques are not new. What is new is research on how people actually learn and how the two components, accelerated programming and accelerated teaching methods, come together to accelerate learning. All elements in the process must work together: sequence of presentations and activities, the structure and consistency of the classroom, and preparation and the physical and mental involvement of students.

In AL the setting should be comfortable, and colorful activities should be designed to appeal to as many learning styles as possible to ensure that each learner will benefit.

Statement of the Problem

Accelerated Learning does not automatically happen by recognizing the different learning styles, but combining a learning style with intellectual activity and using all the senses can have a profound effect on learning. This question remains: How does the identification of various learning styles affect teaching methods and strategies, so Accelerated Learning is achieved?

Definition of Terms

Accelerated Learning:

"Accelerated Learning is a Result. Accelerated Learning is, first and foremost, an end, not a means. Put another way, Accelerated Learning is the results achieved, not the methods used. It is essential to associate Accelerated Learning with outcomes and not with particular methods (games, music, color, activities, etc). Whatever methods work to accelerate and enhance learning are, by this definition, Accelerated Learning methods" (Meier, 2000, p. xxi).

- **Acceleration:** Methods of instruction that allow a reduction of in-class hours.

- **Sequential Curriculum:** Content and competencies build from one class to the next.

- **Cohort Learning**: Students should learn as much from shared experiences with other students as they do from textbooks and lectures.

- **Facilitation:** The role of the instructor is to guide and stimulate the class, so there will be limited formal lecture.

- **Adult Learning:** Accelerated Programming operates on the assumption that adult students should be responsible for their own education. Hence,

the role of the staff and instructors is to facilitate students' exposure to learning experiences; the students are responsible for assimilating the information (Meier, 2000, p. xxi).

Learning Styles:

"Research has indicated that different people learn in different ways and that one size does not fit all. This has seriously challenged our idea of formal education and training as a cookie-cutter, assembly line process"(Meier, 2000, p. 4). "Everyone learns best in an option-rich environment that appeals to all learning styles and sensory modes"(Meier, 2000, p. 217).

Multiple Intelligences:

Howard Gardner viewed intelligence as "the capacity to solve problems or to fashion products that are valued in one or more cultural setting" (Rose, 1997, p. 37). Through these intelligences people develop their preferred learning style. Gardner formulated a list of seven intelligences:

1. **Verbal linguistic** involves sensitivity to spoken and written language, the capacity to use language to accomplish certain goals.

2. **Musical** involves skill in the performance, composition, and appreciation of musical patterns.

3. **Mathematical-logical** consists of the capacity to analyze problems logically and carry out mathematical operations.

4. **Spatial** involves the potential to recognize and use the patterns of wide space and more confined areas.

5. **Bodily kinesthetic** entails the potential of using one's whole body or parts of the body to solve problems.

6. **Inter-personal** involves the capacity to understand the intentions, motivations, and desires of other people. It allows people to work effectively with others.

7. **Intra-personal** entails understanding oneself, to appreciate one's feelings, fears, and motivations (Smith, 2008).

Methods:

"A systematic procedure, technique, or mode of inquiring employed by, or proper to a particular discipline or art. A systematic plan followed in presenting material for instruction" (Merriam Webster Dictionary, 2010).

Strategies:

"An adaptation or complex of adaptations (as of behavior, or structure) that serves or appears to serve an important function in achieving evolutionary success"(Merriam Webster Dictionary, 2010).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research was twofold in that both the instructors' course design and the student participants' learning process were investigated to determine how they were enhanced and accelerated. It was necessary for the instructor to understand the principles and methods of AL in order to effectively implement the AL system. Research showed instructors how to better develop a contextual, enjoyable, and proven approach to learning. Information about AL research was also necessary for student participants to understand AL methods and approaches in order to have an

open mind and body designed to make them more creative, more energized, and more successful in the classroom and beyond.

Delimitations of the Research

This research project was conducted in and through the Madison Area Technical College and UW-Platteville Library over a period of thirty (30) days. Primary research was conducted via the Internet through Research Databases with EbscoHOST as the primary source. Key search topics included, *Accelerated Learning, multiple intelligence, learning cycle, learning styles,* and *teaching methods.*

Method of Approach

A review of literature on Accelerated Learning, learning styles, and teaching methods was conducted. A second review of literature relating to research, studies, and anecdotal evidence showed the effect that various teaching methods and strategies had on accelerating the learning process of students. The findings were summarized and recommendations made.

This researcher had the opportunity to team teach a Retail Management course, using the Accelerated Learning format and methods. Personal observations and findings are summarized as part of this research.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A review of related literature focusing on adult learners, learning theory, brain research, instructional theory and practice, and learning styles was conducted to provide a foundation for the research. The literature associated with Accelerated Learning methodology itself was emphasized in order to consider the perceptions of students and faculty regarding the application of Accelerated Learning strategies. The purpose of this paper was to review current research and theory on Accelerated Learning and to offer practical suggestions as to how educators in Accelerated Learning programs could provide an effective learning experience.

Principles of Accelerated Learning

The major principle underlying the program's design is that adult education should be *active* and *collaborative.* Active learning incorporates the essential skills of talking and listening, writing, reading, and reflecting. These skills encouraged participation and stimulated interest.

Research showed that adult learners were more receptive to an active approach to learning than younger students, largely because many of them had learned cooperative skills in their career fields. In such an approach, instructors functioned as coaches or educational engineers, designing learning experiences that led students to hypothesize, predict, and evaluate information. In addition, because students moved through the program as interdependent cohort learners, their learning had to be collaborative, and thus they had to receive training in group communication. The cooperative behaviors fostered in cohort groups improved individual performance, increased self-esteem, and enhanced mutual appreciation among group members.

Meier explained "To get the most out of using Accelerated Learning, it's essential to get a firm grasp on its underlying principles." The guiding principles for the Accelerated Learning environment are as follows:

1. **Learning Involved the Whole Mind and Body.** Learning was not all merely "head" learning (conscious, rational, "left-brained," and verbal) but involved the whole body/mind with all its emotions, senses, and receptors.

2. **Learning was Created, Not Consumed.** Knowledge was not something a learner absorbed, but something a learner created. Learning happened when a learner integrated new knowledge and skill into his or her existing structure of self. Learning was literally a matter of creating new meanings, new neural networks, and new patterns of electro/chemical interactions within one's total brain/body system.

3. **Collaboration Aided Learning**. All good learning had a social base. Learners often learned more by interacting with peers than by any other means. Competition between learners slowed learning. Cooperation among learners accelerated it. A genuine learning community was always better for learning than a collection of isolated individuals.

4. **Learning Took Place on Many Levels Simultaneously.** Learning was not a matter of absorbing one little thing at a time in linear fashion, but absorbing many things at once. Good learning engaged people on many levels simultaneously (conscious and para-conscious, mental and physical) and used all the receptors and senses and paths it could into a person's total

brain/body system. The brain, after all, is not a sequential, but a parallel processor and thrived when it was challenged to do many things at once.

5. **Learning Came From Doing the Work Itself (With Feedback).** People learned best in context. Things learned in isolation are hard to remember and quick to evaporate. Learn how to swim by swimming, how to manage by managing, how to sing by singing, how to sell by selling, and how to care for customers by caring for customers. The real and the concrete were far better teachers than the hypothetical and the abstract--provided there was time for total immersion, feedback, reflection, and re-immersion.

6. **Positive Emotions Greatly Improved Learning.** Feelings determined both the quality and quantity of one's learning. Negative feelings inhibited learning. Positive feelings accelerated it. Learning that was stressful, painful, and dreary could not hold a candle to learning that was joyful, relaxed, and engaging.

7. **The Image Brain Absorbed Information Instantly and Automatically**. The human nervous system was more of an image processor than a word processor. Concrete images were much easier to grasp and retain than were verbal abstractions. Translating verbal abstractions into concrete images of all kinds made those verbal abstractions faster to learn and easier to remember. (Meier, 2000, p. 9)

Techniques and Technology Applied to A.L.

"As no one method or technique can by itself adequately encompass the

variations of the human brain, teachers need a frame of reference that enables them to

select from the vast array of methods and approaches that are available" (Meier, 2000

p. ix).

If instructors understood how people actually learned and could match teaching

methods to best reach the learner; then learning improved or was accelerated. "To get

the most from Accelerated Learning, [instructors] need[ed] to know how and when to

use each element and understand the theory behind it" (DePorter, 2001, n.p.).

The key was to determine how (see Appendix A: Ten Techniques for

Accelerated Learning) and when to teach with Accelerated Learning methodologies.

"Accelerated Learning has one aim only: to get results. [Instructors] really have to

distinguish it from those fun-and-games, gimmicky, 'creative' approaches that call

attention to themselves and are often a big waste of time" (Meier, 2000, p. ix).

McKeon emphasized the importance of collaborative learning as a technique

necessary for Accelerated Learning.

A major premise of Accelerated Learning was that learning must be collaborative.

AL treats the acquisition of knowledge as a collaborative effort between trainers

and trainees. Trainees tended to feel less pressure to learn when in partnership

with the trainer and when the responsibility for learning is shared. When trainees

feel less stressed, they're more likely to learn. In AL the trainer gets involved

with trainees in the learning activities. (1995, p 64)

It is commonly accepted that everyone learns in different ways. Educators, therefore, needed to try to meet the needs of all students by providing a variety of lessons using various teaching methods. When integrating technology in lessons, teachers had to make sure to remember the needs of all the learners and use various methods and techniques. According to research on Accelerated Learning, an optimal learning environment included five specific elements:

- **A Positive Learning Environment**. People learned best in a positive physical, emotional, and social environment, one that is both relaxed and stimulating. A sense of wholeness, safety, interest, and enjoyment was essential for optimizing human learning.

- **Total Learner Involvement.** People learned best when they were totally and actively involved and took responsibility for their own learning. Learning was not a spectator sport but a participatory one. Knowledge was not something a learner passively absorbed, but something a learner actively created. Thus, AL tended to be more activity-based rather than materials-based or presentations-based.

- **Collaboration Among Learners.** People generally learned best in an environment of collaboration. All good learning tended to be social. Whereas traditional learning emphasized competition between isolated individuals, AL emphasized collaboration between learners in a learning community.

- **Variety That Appeals To All Learning Styles.** People learned best when they had a rich variety of learning options that allowed them to use all their senses and exercise their preferred learning style. Rather than thinking of a

learning program as a one-dish meal, AL treated it as a results-driven, learner-centered smorgasbord.

- **Contextual Learning.** People learned best in context. Facts and skills learned in isolation were hard to absorb and quick to evaporate. The best learning came from doing the work itself in a continual process of "real-world" immersion, feedback, reflection, evaluation, and re-immersion (Meier, 2000, p. xvii).

Bodies of Research

This review of literature revealed three principle bodies of research that impact Accelerated Learning:

- Brain-based Research

- Learning Styles and Multiple Intelligences

- Authentic Assessment

Brain-based research on learning. Research on the brain has been used to inform educational practice for many years and has become more and more popular. Brain-based research helped instructors to know the many influences that affected learning. The more instructors understood about "how" students learned best given the variables that affect learning, the better equipped to provide instruction that maximized learning outcomes.

Learning styles and multiple intelligences. Learning styles research was predominantly used to understand learning preferences that students used to receive and/or process information. Obviously, the ideal was to create instruction that addressed all three learning styles: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic.

Authentic assessment. Not enough can be said about authentic assessment. Basically, what it means is that students were tested on what they had been taught and hopefully, what they had learned. The greatest implications were as follows: curriculum is aligned with what is expected to be learned; strategies used to teach are according to students' needs; and assessment instruments used are flexible and adequately and appropriately used to measure on-going- performance. The bottom line is that authentic assessment offered students the opportunity to "measure up" to standards that were aligned to the curriculum.

How to Plan for AL Differentiated Instruction

After having read what the research had to offer on differentiated instruction, specifically, brain-based research on learning, learning styles and multiple intelligences, and authentic assessment, the instructor was now ready to plan instruction.

Step 1--Know the students. Determine the ability level of the students. This was done by surveying past records of student performance to determine capabilities, prior learning, past experiences with learning, and similar concepts.

Survey student interests. It was also important to get to know students informally. This was done by an interest inventory, an interview/conference, or asking students to respond to an open-ended questionnaire with key questions about their learning preferences (depending on the age group).

Knowing the students as individuals was the key when planning for activities that required less structure. However, it was still important to determine learning styles and preferences for students who had a hard time controlling their behaviors. Behavior management was less of a problem in situations in which the instructor made the effort to

get to know students as individuals. Sometimes knowing preferences helped to motivate students to attend to any tasks presented.

Step 2--Have a repertoire of teaching strategies. Because "one size does not fit all," it was imperative that a variety of teaching strategies be used in a differentiated classroom. Among many teaching strategies that could be considered, there were four worth mentioning: direct instruction, inquiry-based learning, cooperative learning, and information processing models.

Direct instruction. This was the most widely used and most traditional teaching strategy. It was teacher centered and used to cover a great amount of material in the amount of time teachers had to cover what students needed to learn. It was structured and was based on mastery learning.

Inquiry-based learning. Inquiry-based learning was very popular in teaching at the time of this research. It was based on the scientific method and worked very well in developing critical thinking and problem solving skills. It was student centered and required students to conduct investigations independent of the teacher, unless otherwise directed or guided through the process of discovery.

Cooperative learning. Probably one of the most misunderstood strategies for teaching was "cooperative learning." Yet, if employed properly, cooperative learning produced extraordinary results in learning outcomes. It was based on grouping small teams of students heterogeneously according to ability, interest, background, etc. However, one of the most important features of cooperative learning was to pick the best strategy to be used to assign the task for students to accomplish. Below are four popular strategies:

- Role play. Two to three students were asked to role-play how they might deal with real situations on the job as supervisors, managers, customer service reps, or other roles. Each student was asked to take a certain role and was allowed a period of time to confer with others before acting out the situation.

- Real-World problem solving. Real problems were posed (relative to the subject matter) that needed to be solved in an organization. Students were asked to apply what was learned to solve these problems.

- Question parties—question ball. Students were asked to gather in a circle. One learner started by asking a question and throwing a Koosh ball to anyone in the circle. The person catching the ball was to answer the question. If the person could not answer the question immediately, the ball could be thrown to someone else in the circle. Finally, the person who answered the question got to ask a new question, and the process started over again

- Learning games. Accelerated Learning did not always require games, and games did not always accelerate learning. However, games used with discretion added variety, zest, and interest to some learning programs.

Processing strategies. Teaching students "how to" process information was a key factor in teaching students how to strategically organize, store, retrieve, and apply information presented. Such strategies included, but were not limited to the following:

- Be positive. Create learning environments that reduced stress and created positive feelings in people.

- Integrate thinking. Provide people with problem-posing and information accessing exercises that stimulated them to think, make connections, and create value for themselves.

- Make learning social. Foster collaboration among learners that engaged more of the total brain and improved the quality and quantity of learning.

- Move while learning. Plan experiences that got people out of their seats and provided opportunities for physical movement and activity as part of the learning process.

- Be practical. Provide a real-world context into which people fully immersed themselves and learned with all their senses on many levels simultaneously.

Step 3--Identify a variety of instructional activities. Engaging students in the learning process using activities that motivated and challenged students to remain on task was probably one of the most frustrating events in the teaching learning process. If the instructor knew the students' profiles, that instructor had a better chance to keep students on task to completion of any given assignment or activity. In a differentiated classroom, activities were suited to the needs of students according to the mixed ability levels, interests, and backgrounds. For example, if English language learners were in the class, the instructor needed to provide activities that were bilingual in nature or that provided the necessary resources for students to complete the activity with success. Good activities required students to develop and apply knowledge in ways that made sense to them and that they found meaningful and relevant. Such techniques were as follows:

- Collaborative pretests and knowledge sharing
- Observations of real-world events

- Whole-brain, whole-body involvement

- Interactive presentations

- Colorful presentations graphics and props

- Partner and team-based learning projects

- Discovery exercises (personal, partnered, team-based)

- Problem solving exercises

Step 4--Identify ways to assess effectiveness of instruction or evaluate student progress. Once again, educators could not assume that "one size fits all." As a result, varying means of student assessment were necessary if students were to be given every opportunity to demonstrate authentic learning. Authentic assessment had been around for a long time but was taking the limelight when attempting to measure students' progress in a fair and equitable way. A variety of assessment techniques could include portfolios, rubrics, performance-based assessment, and knowledge mapping.

The complexity of the human brain contributes to a variety of ways that individuals receive and process information. While there was a vast array of theories regarding learning styles, the two most often cited by Accelerated Learning theorists were the theory of multiple intelligences and the concept of learning modes or styles (Nicholl & Rose, 1997; Meier, 2000).

First, the theory of multiple intelligences suggested that people learned through a variety of dimensions or intelligences. Gardner (1983) defined intelligence as a set of skills of problem solving, enabling individuals to resolve genuine problems or difficulties. Gardner originally proposed seven intelligences: linguistic, logical/mathematical, spatial, musical, kinesthetic, intrapersonal, and interpersonal. Subsequently; naturalist

intelligence has been added to the list. Further speculation revealed that there might be

a ninth category of spiritual intelligence. According to Gardner, each individual had one

or two intelligences that were highly developed, and the more developed each

intelligence was, the more prepared an individual was to meet the challenges of life. By

drawing on one's dominant areas of intelligence and utilizing others, learners more fully

used the learning resources at their disposal. Even without formal testing, teachers

often identified students' intelligences through observation. Furthermore, the teacher

could use an awareness of multiple intelligences to design classroom activities that

drew from more than the logical and linguistic forms of intelligence (most commonly

used in academic settings) to help students learn more effectively. (Gardner, 2002,

2008)

  Second, research on learning modes or styles had identified that learners have

different preferred ways of learning. Learning styles developed through a combination

of environment and practice. Three primary modes of learning most often identified in

the literature were visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. Visual learners learned best

through means such as pictures, diagrams, and other forms of visual stimulation.

Auditory learners received information best via avenues such as audiotapes, lectures,

and class discussions. Kinesthetic or somatic learners preferred learning through

physical activity such as movement and direct involvement (Meier, 2000; Rose &

Nicholl, 1997). All learners used all modes, but tended to favor certain modes over the

others (Boyd, 2007, p. 41).

  Awareness of students' preferred learning modes helped adult educators

structure learning activities that maximized learner strengths. How did this relate to

using MI? How did all of this change both what and how individuals taught?

Technological advances not only made lives easier, but changed the way people lived

and thought. While it was later rather than sooner, it happened in classrooms too.

Realistically, the most outlandish predictions of 2010 could be considered conservative

in 20 years. All that could be done was to stay abreast of technology and think of how it

could offer relatively new ways to use MI to help students grow and learn.

Schools and parents recognized the importance of technology in education.

Teachers in schools and parents in homes used computers to enhance children's

education and develop important computer skills. Educators had to consider whether or

not the technology would meet the needs of different learning styles. Common practice

did indicate that technology did meet the needs of various learning styles.

The multiple intelligences were enhanced with the use of technology. Following

Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, teachers have encouraged development by

providing enrichment opportunities in each of the areas of the intellect (see Appendix B:

Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences).

Effects of Accelerated Learning on the Teacher

Those who had fully adopted Accelerated Learning methods reported outstanding results. Peter Anderson, principal of Northwood Middle School in Illinois, stated:

> Kids report enjoying school more and having more tools to succeed. Early indications show that students seem more proficient in spelling and vocabulary and feedback from parents shows that their children are more motivated. The atmosphere is more positive and upbeat. It's helping to bring an air of fun to learning. (Teachnology, Inc., 2007)

Improved learning outcomes were the kind of results that could be achieved when Accelerated Learning methods were carefully and systematically applied. The teacher had to have an in-depth understanding of Accelerated Learning to make the many elements of this diverse methodology into a unified whole. Accelerated Learning was perceived as a multifaceted approach to teaching the whole person, as diverse in its techniques as the students themselves.

"As change in society creates change in education, it is important to periodically re-examine both what is taught and how it is taught" (Bartlett K., 2006, p. 128). Of the several alternative pedagogical approaches that had been increasingly applied in post-secondary settings, the accelerated class format was infrequently studied. In Bartlett's research (2006, pp. 127-128), student perceptions on a class taught in an accelerated format showed that the students felt that despite (or perhaps because of) the accelerated format, they and the instructor created an effective learning environment that reflected the principles and practices associated with real

life work situations.

Conclusions drawn from this study focused on the need to structure the entire learning environment to fit with the accelerated course format. "Instructors of accelerated courses considered the attributes of high-quality intensive courses as identified by Scott (2003). These included instructor characteristics such as teaching with enthusiasm, having instructors with knowledge, experience, good communication skills, and willingness to learn from and consult with students" (Bartlett K., 2006, p. 128). Further, teaching methods should have fostered active learning, interaction, and experiential and applied learning. Lastly, it was recommended that the course be designed to emphasize depth over breadth of material while also realizing that different types of assignments and assessments are needed.

Successful AL facilitating is not a mechanical skill that can be acquired without full participation of mind, body, and soul. AL was not just a set of clever, creative techniques that could replace old assumptions about teaching, but a whole new set of assumptions. "The important point is this: AL is systemic, not cosmetic, it is a philosophy that departs from conventional notions of learning in some significant ways" (Meier, 2000, p. 237). It required a person's whole being to participate in the AL philosophy and a complete feeling for and sense of the resulting human implications. People must have developed this understanding, or efforts with AL were out of tune, disjointed, and ineffective.

"The qualities most likely to help make one successful with AL were Care, Creativity, and Courage" according to Meier (2000, pp. 237-240). A word about each of these essential characteristics follows.

Genuine care for people would greatly assist the AL instructor. Meier thought it was essential that the instructor cared for people and cared for the subject matter being taught. Being a learning facilitator was a form of care and promoted learning together as a team. Passion for the subject showed in how the subject was presented. If a subject being taught does not appear to excite the facilitator, how could one expect learners to get excited about it? Keep in mind AL is as much how one teaches as what one teaches.

Creativity in teaching meant that teaching involved perpetual creation. It was not a matter of creating for the sake of creating, but for the sake of awakening people to their full potential for learning and for life. To be a responsible learning professional meant to creatively lead the way (Meier, 2000, pp. 237-240).

Courage was having the nerve to be a learning leader, to break away from the old assumptions and out of the grey, inhibiting confines of old fashioned teaching and learning assumptions. Instructors had to have a willingness to try new things, to risk failure, and to constantly be ready to learn. Without courage, teachers become "just one more lifeless robot in an unconscious civilization" (Meier, 2000, p. 239).

An additional review of this researcher's personal experience from a team teaching situation concluded that understanding the Accelerated Learning methods and techniques was one thing, but knowledge and experience in the course content was the other important factor. It was an advantage to have been very familiar with the course content and important to have had some kind of basis for materials and time in order to adapt to the accelerated methods (see Appendix C: Accelerated Learning Independent Study Project).

Successful Outcomes of Accelerated Learning to Students

Accelerated Learning had been shown to speed up the learning process and increase comprehension, retention, and critical thinking skills. Teachers who used Accelerated Learning methods reported higher test scores and grades, enhanced motivation and self-esteem, and greater class participation. Corporate trainers who used these methods found they were able to teach more, in less time, and significantly raising their training effectiveness ratings.

A doctoral dissertation on the affects of Accelerated Learning at Super Camp involved 6,042 students, ages 12-22, and utilized quantitative and qualitative data over a seven-year time period. Results showed 84% of the students reported having increased self-esteem, and 99% of the students indicated they had continued to use the skills learned after the 10-day experience. The students who entered with a 1.9 GPA or lower attained a one-point GPA growth, on average, after the program. Overall, students across the "A" through "F" range made a half-point growth after 10 days of instruction. The study noted, "It is apparent that the program had a profound effect on students' lives, emotional outlook toward themselves, their parents and peers, and education in general" (Teachnology, Inc., 2007). Studies also showed that a compressed learning schedule actually improved memory retention.

The benefits of AL were undeniable. Advances in technology have made it easy for students to take part in interactive, multimedia, and Accelerated Learning lessons that simulate the classroom experience.

In traditional semester schedules, students often complained that by the time the final came around, they had forgotten what they had learned in the first weeks of class. With the accelerated schedule there were unlikely to be any such complaints. The material was always fresh in the student's mind. A condensed schedule of classes also meant that students were more likely to remain interested in the material throughout the course. Longer courses sometimes caused students' interest to flag (Teachnology, Inc., 2007).

Accelerated Learning also meant concepts were reinforced via a variety of delivery methods. The more often students encountered key concepts the more likely they were to remember them. In addition, if a student did not understand a concept, he or she could quickly and easily make contact with the professor or with other students, via e-mail or class message boards. Technology also benefited AL and allowed students to study course material at a convenient time. Students could spend more time on more difficult concepts while breezing through the information that was easy. Accelerated Learning was particularly well suited to adult learners, who tended to pick up certain concepts faster; thanks to their real-life experiences.

The Accelerated Learning model offered a number of advantages. The accelerated format helped students earn their degrees more quickly, of course, but it also got them more deeply involved in the learning process, held their attention longer, and helped them retain information better. Clearly, Accelerated Learning created an environment in which students did their best work.

CHAPTER THREE: SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Effective teachers have been differentiating instruction for as long as teaching has been a profession. It has to do with being sensitive to the needs of students and finding ways to help students make the necessary connections for learning to occur in the best possible way.

Summary

Contemporary teachers have extensive research available to assist in creating instructional environments to maximize the learning opportunities, and assist students in developing the knowledge and skills necessary to achieve positive learning outcomes. In summary, Accelerated Learning (AL) is differentiated instruction using teaching strategies that connect with individual student's learning strategies. The ultimate goal is to provide a learning environment that will maximize the potential for student success. The important concept to remember is to hold onto effective teaching strategies that lead students to positive learning outcomes and to make adjustments when necessary. Teachers need to practice the following techniques:

- Be flexible and open to change.

- Take risks and try teaching and learning strategies that would otherwise be ignored.

- Manage instructional time effectively.

Using these techniques meets the standards and also provides motivating, challenging, and meaningful experiences for school age students who are socialized to receive and process information in ways that require differentiation of experience. "These are very exciting times for the teaching profession. We are faced with a generation of

learners who are challenging us to think about how we deliver instruction" (Technology, Inc., 2007).

Recommendations

Once people evolve out of older traditional teaching models and extract that which is really valuable, they can design effective learning programs much faster. Older methods put a heavy emphasis on instructional media: presentation, materials, computers, etc. In contrast, Accelerated Learning methods rid the learning process of much of that. Accelerated Learning methods proceed from the belief that people learn more from experience (with feedback) than they do from materials and presentations. People learn how to swim by swimming, how to sell by selling, and how to manage by managing. One does not learn any new skill by merely listening to someone talk about it, whether an instructor, a book, or a computer. By ridding oneself of designing elaborate learning materials, and instead designing learning experiences, one can save much time and get far better results. Instructors do less. Learners do more. Everybody wins.

Following are six simple recommendations that will enable one to teach using Accelerated Learning methods while developing more effective learning programs (Meier, 2000, p. 216).

1. Design instruction with the 4-Phase Learning Cycle (Preparation, Presentation, Practice, and Performance).

2. Appeal to all learning styles.

3. Make instructional designs activity based.

4. Create a learning community.

5.   Alternate between physically active and physically passive learning activities.

6.   Create a flexible, open-ended design

Through personal experience in teaching an AL class, this researcher recommends not only an understanding of Accelerated Learning methods and techniques, but also a broad knowledge and experience in the course content. It was important to have some kind of reference for content and time to adapt to the accelerated teaching strategies. By having a strong understanding of the curriculum, this researcher was more able to adjust to different teaching methods.

Further recommendations from this researcher's experience are that these methods must fit the teaching style of the instructor and the learning styles of the students. Consequently, what looks and sounds good in theory may not fit the makeup of the students and the content of the subject. There has to remain the element of flexibility with time, methods, and content (see Appendix C: Independent Study Project).

It is recommended that all these new approaches and their applications as well as basic principles, strategies, and tools of AL be further investigated. Some directions for research were identified by Scott and Conrad (1992, 411-459). Major topics for future research could include the following:

1.   Current instructional approaches and methodologies--What are the theoretical foundations?

2.   Accelerated and intensive learning--How do they work in the classroom and what should be improved? Pros and cons, and how can we use them to teach our students?

3. Teaching adults--What are the best ways to enhance their learning outcomes?

4. Instructional design--How does one optimally structure and plan the course, the lesson, and the whole instructional process?

5. Effective presentation of the new material--What are the most effective modalities, formats, and strategies?

6. Student activities--What are the best methods and strategies for collaborative and individual work in onsite, online, or blended environments?

7. Educational technology--When and how can an instructor make technology work best?

8. Student attitudes and dispositions--How can student attitudes and dispositions be affected for better learning?

9. Student motivation--How can instructors raise motivation?

10. Time management--How can instructors assist students to manage time more efficiently, especially in an online class; and how do educators increase time efficiency of learning in general?

11. Student readiness to learn--How can student readiness improve learning productivity of busy adults?

As much as Accelerated Learning is gaining ground, due in part to online accessibility, convenience, and flexibility, the innovative approaches discussed in this research will also undeniably continue to grow in view of an increasing public demand for accelerated programs. Given adult and part-time student trends, accelerated

programs, probably will continue to grow in the future. It is clear to see this tendency is gaining momentum (Serdyukov, 2006).

Accelerated Learning works!

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

10 Accelerated Learning Techniques

Presented by best-selling author, Brian Tracy, and internationally renowned learning expert, Colin Rose
(The following tips come courtesy of the breakthrough audio course.)

"**Accelerated Learning Techniques**"

1. **Teach someone else what you are learning.**

    Practice the Accelerated Learning system in short bursts of 30 minutes of study.

    Take frequent rests. To really soak up the knowledge, plan to teach what you

    are learning to someone else. Having to be accountable for someone else's

    learning will make you pay more attention and really learn the material.

2. **Ask questions.**

    Intelligence grows through curiosity. By formulating questions about the subjects

    you are studying, you become very focused on getting the answers. You zero in

    on the information, sifting through it to pick up the important points that answer

    the questions you set.

3. **What's in it for me?**

    Motivate yourself to concentrate and absorb the info by asking, "What will I get

    out of it? How will learning this information benefit me in the long run?" By

    focusing on all the ways it will benefit you, you give yourself more and more

    reasons to learn and studying becomes easier.

4. **Describe aloud in your own words.**

    Center yourself, focus on your program of learning and begin describing aloud

    the information that you have been researching. Paraphrasing aloud, particularly

at speed, causes you to dredge up and make conscious what you have learnt, and exposes the gaps in your knowledge that you can re-cover until it is part of you.

5. **Draw a picture and write in your own words**.

Speed learning involves 8 multiple intelligences, including visual and linguistic. You harness your right brain visual abilities by drawing pictures that help illuminate your notes and which stick in your mind. Mind-mapping is especially recommended. Also draw on your linguistic intelligence by re-writing the information you are studying in your own words. This all helps change the information from something that is alien and foreign to something that is familiar and comfortable and accessible.

6. **Test the knowledge.**

Ask logical questions to test the authenticity of what you are studying. Is it true? You have to be like a renaissance man, and be willing to test established knowledge. Distance yourself from any emotional involvement with the knowledge, and systematically pull and tug on it, testing it from every angle. Critical thinking and examination of the knowledge will deepen your understanding and speed your absorption of the subject.

7. **Involve other senses.**

You are multi-sensual, multi-intelligence being. Reading brings words in through the eyes and has limitations as a means of effective learning. Use pictures too. Record the information onto tape, and/or listen to audio tapes on the subject or watch videos about it. Stimulate your tactile senses with different fabrics,

different chairs, by getting a foot massage etc. Eat something unusual whilst you are learning. The taste can become anchored to the info and will help you recall it. The same with smell, the memory of smells is the most immediate memory system. Rub some lavender oil on your wrists, as you start your study program, then when you want to recall the info at a later date simply get out the same aromatherapy oil and sniff. Stimulating your senses will help the info come flooding back to your conscious mind.

8. **Move about.**

   Sometimes we learn best by doing, so get into action. If your area of study involves physical skills, then get doing them. Otherwise, ride an exercise bike while reading; go for a walk whilst listening to your audio notes; have sex while playing the info in the background! Kinesthetic movement locks knowledge in.

9. **Visualize the end result.**

   See yourself practicing the skill you are learning or using the information you are studying as an expert. It's locked in to your brain and fully and easily accessible to you.

10. **Peak state and PMA**.

    Develop a positive mental attitude towards your learning program. The principle of positivity will flood your system with feel-good endorphins and just make the whole training so much easier and more pleasurable. Get into a peak state for studying, by using the techniques of NLP to create 'anchors' to peak emotional states. When you begin a study session: stretch, sit up straight, put a smile on your face, and approach your studies with positive expectations.

Appendix B

Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences (Thomas R. Hoerr, 1988)

Linguistic: Use of word processing programs can help teach language, writing, editing, and rewriting skills. Also the Internet is an invaluable tool in learning. Through e-mail students can improve their language skills as well.

Other applications students may benefit from are:

- Word processors with voice annotations.
- Desktop publishing programs.
- Programs that allow children to create stories, poems, essays, etc.
- Multimedia authoring.
- Videodiscs to create presentations.
- Using tape recorders.

Logical-Mathematical: Computer programs that teach logic and critical thinking skills. These are also in game formats that could motivate students. Math programs that allows drilling and practicing. Database programs that help explore and organize data and information.

Other application students may benefit from:

- Problem solving software
- Computer Aided design programs
- Strategy game software
- Graphing calculators
- Multimedia authoring programs
- Spreadsheet programs

Visual/Spatial: Graphics programs that help develop creativity and visual skills. Also browsing the Internet, organizing files, folders will develop some spatial understanding.

Other applications students may benefit from are:

- Draw programs (CorelDraw)
- Image composing programs (image composer)
- Paint programs (Photopaint, Microsoft paint)
- Reading programs with visual clues
- Web page programs
- 3D software
- Software games
- Spreadsheet programs which allow students to see charts, maps or diagrams
- Multimedia authoring programs

Musical: programs that help write or play music.

- Music composing software
- Videodisc player
- Programs integrating stories with songs and instruments
- Reading programs which relate letter/sound with music
- Programs which allow students to create their own music
- CD-ROMs about music and instruments
- Audio CDs
- Tape recorders
- Word processors (to write about a movie or song)

Bodily-Kinesthetic: Using computers will help develop hand-eye coordination. Working with a computer will allow students to become involved in their learning, actively.

Other applications students may benefit from are:

- Software games that allow contact with the keyboard, mouse, joystick and other devices.
- Programs that allow children to move objects around the screen.
- Word processing programs
- Animation programs

Interpersonal: Students can work in groups of two to four on the computers. Working in groups will strengthen student's communication and cooperation skills.

Applications students may benefit from are:

- Computer games which requires two or more persons
- Programs that allow to create group presentations (PowerPoint)
- Telecommunication programs
- E-mail
- Distance education
- Chat to discuss ideas
- Help others with any programs

Intrapersonal: The computer can help students build up individual skills. It allows for differences in children's learning styles and abilities. Students may work on their own pace with computers.

Applications learners may benefit from are:

- Any programs which allow students to work independently.
- Games involving only one person.
- Brainstorming or problem solving software.
- Instructional games
- Word processors for journaling and recording feelings
- Developing multimedia portfolio

Appendix C

Accelerated Learning Independent Study Project

This researcher chose to participate in an Independent Study Project involving a team teaching situation in order to observe, practice, and learn principles of Accelerated Learning. These principles were adapted to the Retail Management Class at MATC. The proposed Accelerated Retail Management class was scheduled for six weeks from 1/26-3/02. Each class met once a week 5:30-9:30 p.m. The purpose of this project was to learn and develop skills, knowledge, and confidence to design curriculum and to teach by utilizing Accelerated Learning and teaching techniques.

Prior to the class research included reading materials from the MATC (Continuing Education) CETL staff. This included *The Accelerated Learning Handbook* by Dave Meier and *Accelerated Instructor Training, Accelerated Learning and Teaching Methodologies for MATC Instructors.*

Planning and preparing agendas for each class was done with emphasis on "Sequential Curriculum" and "Cohort Learning Activities." Each class was structured according to an "Accelerated Learning Cycle." This included Preparation (outside of class) Presentation, Practice, Performance, and Reflection (in class)

Understanding the Accelerated Learning methods and techniques was one factor but knowledge and experience in the course content was the other important factor. It was an advantage to have been through at least one semester of teaching the Retail Management class. It was important to have some kind of reference for content and time to adapt to the accelerated methods. Having a strong understanding of the curriculum made the adjustment to using different teaching methods easier.

In this specific situation of team teaching, it was possible to simply observe the AL teaching methods of an experienced lead teacher. This provided the opportunity for more focused observations. It was helpful to observe and learn while not having to worry about planning, facilitating, and timing. Then when it was time to lead and facilitate the second half of the class, this researcher had some confidence in the methods, the flow, and results that were being seen in the class.

When analyzing the observations of the class, and reflecting back on the (AL) teaching experience, it was clear that it takes practice to achieve accelerated teaching and learning skills. These methods must fit the teaching style of the instructor and the learning styles of the students. Consequently, what looks and sounds good in theory may not fit the makeup of the students and the content of the subject. There has to remain the element of flexibility with time, methods, and content. Therefore, it is very important to be able to assess the students in each class as to their particular learning styles and be able to use a variety of methods and materials to best reach all students.

It was concluded that more time be taken on orienting students to and previewing information, prior to the next class meeting. If more time was taken up front to explain the content and materials, then students came to class more prepared and able to share more effectively in face-to-face discussions and activities.

There is much to be considered in adapting to accelerated teaching methods. This researcher was very interested and excited about future experience with Accelerated Learning. In light of this experience, this researcher is looking forward to continuing research on Accelerated Learning and continued teaching experience with accelerated classes at MATC.