



# *Quest: In Search of a Better Way*

## *Accelerated Learning Workshop*

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## *The Quest: In Search of a Better Way An Accelerated Learning Workshop*

### Engage

Imagine yourself a medieval knight on a quest. You are engaged in a search for the golden chalice of learning. You search for training that works, that meets the needs of the job, that captures the learner, that imbeds the learning into long term memory, that allows the learner to transfer the learning to the job, and that equips the learner with tools to continue to improve his/her performance. Imagine what such a quest might be like. You have been challenged by the king to find a better way to accomplish training. As you and others who have been called to the challenge gather, you will find that the king and his advisors have carefully planned some tutoring, a series of controlled experiences where you can try out some of the ideas and knowledge gained and finally, a gauntlet to test your readiness to embark on this search for a better way and to grasp the golden chalice of learning. Imagine that it is not only a challenge but applicable, exciting, and fun to participate in the quest and journey into the world of accelerated learning.



During the quest, you will grow to understand that what you learn in the workshop is applicable in two different ways. The first makes learning happen effectively and efficiently while training an organization. The second involves learning to learn on an individual level. As a participant, you will take the Learning Style Inventory to determine your learning style and based on it and the other content of the workshop, you will be able to develop your own

personal learning plan. Everyone learns differently and when you discover what helps you to learn, you can begin to learn better, faster, and with greater retention. As teachers, trainers, and instructors, this knowledge allows you to facilitate the same benefits for your students, trainees, and training participants as you apply accelerated learning to their training.

### Establish

Throughout time teachers have used various methods to help their students learn. Envision a caveman learning to start a fire by listening to a lecture. Wouldn't he be more successful if he watched someone demonstrate and then did it himself? The native cultures of all continents have taught life's lessons through story, song and ritual. Ancient civilizations like the Greeks, Romans and oriental dynasties used legend and myth to teach value and tradition and Socrates invited his



students to discover truth through questioning. Today many people have re-discovered the efficiency of using many and varied approaches to learning. We call it *Accelerated Learning*.

*Accelerated learning is a process that allows us to assimilate information faster, truly understand the subject matter, and retain the materials over time.*

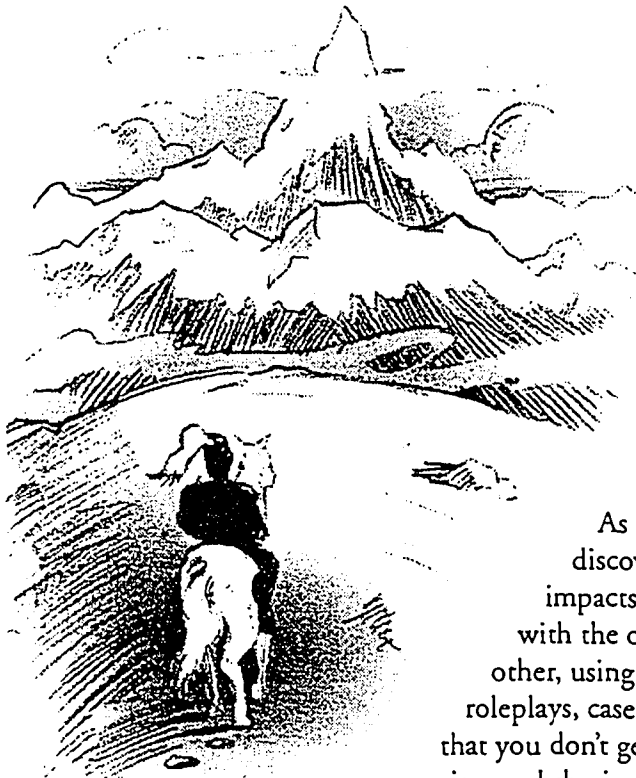
Learning, like all other aspects of our modern fast-paced lives, must be accomplished faster, last longer, result in better performance, and cost less.

## Explore/Expose

How can this happen?

The process is based on the philosophy that is summed up by two words: "Learner-centered."

If most of the needs of an individual are met or addressed during instruction, learning will occur more rapidly and will be remembered and accessed longer. Traditionally, instructional modules are focused on what the instructor will do, what content the instructor will impart, and how the instructor will conduct the session. We've even seen some instructional objectives designed to be met only by the instructor. "Learner-centered," once again, means that the entire design of the instruction is focused on what the learner needs. In learner-centered instruction, it is imperative to consider what the learner will do, how the learner's brain can be accessed, what activities the learner can participate in that will reinforce the learning, what help the learner needs to organize the content being learned, and what the learner needs to file it in the brain and code it for easy retrieval. The focus is on the learner.



As you proceed on this quest (the workshop) you will discover how YOU learn, how your brain works and what impacts your learning processes. This quest allows you to work with the other participants, teach each other and learn from each other, using a variety of carefully designed activities like games, roleplays, case studies, analogies, and competitions. Just to make sure that you don't get too wrapped up in the "events" time is provided for review and sharing your ideas and "learnings" with others. Armed with new knowledge about learning and how it happens, you then embark upon a journey through mythical scenarios where you can practice the new skills and knowledge you've acquired, building confidence in your understanding. It is through this application phase of the workshop that you will acquire the tools necessary to implement your newly acquired knowledge, skills, and attitudes when you return to your job. All of this is based on the learner-centered philosophy supported by four key principles: Holistic, Open, Flexible, Fun.

## HOLISTIC

The holistic approach is essential because it indicates that the training is personalized and reaches all learners because it admits that people learn differently—with different stimuli, at different rates, and with many parts of the total human being affecting the learning process. Besides considering that humans are thinking individuals, accelerated learning considers how the brain processes information. It also considers the psychological impact and the influence of the rest of the body as it participates in the learning process. The holistic principle recognizes that the attitude of learners about their own capabilities or about learning is an important influence on the learning process. The learner's willingness (or lack thereof) to take a risk is addressed and respected. Another factor that is considered is the influence of "social" interactions on learning. Such words as collaboration, cooperation, experiential and participatory, address social impacts on the learning process. Holistic instruction addresses the entire person.

## OPENNESS

Openness allows for the unexpected and unknown in this process or journey called learning. Openness permits choosing multiple roads or methods to complete the learning process. It implies using expansive creativity to try anything that helps the learner learn. Openness encourages divergent thinking that helps us to move beyond perceived boundaries and allows us to think "out of the box." In this philosophy, openness allows for accepting and incorporating innovative or diverse ideas about learning, including the unexpected, without penalty. It is open because of the belief that anyone can learn and a non-threatening environment is established that stimulates and encourages learning.

## FLEXIBILITY

Flexibility allows for differences and changes. The flexibility principle of accelerated learning provides each training participant methods to learn the material in the most beneficial way for that individual. It provides for all the individual differences mentioned above and it allows for the differences between the groups attempting to learn. No two classes will have the same mix of participants, yet often in the traditional non-accelerated learning environment thousands of participants attend standardized training each year. Flexibility stimulates the search for different ways to achieve the best results.

## FUN

The last principle of accelerated learning is that it must be fun. Fun means engaging the senses, laughing, dreaming, reflecting; it is exciting, inventive, caring, and meaningful. Fun allows participants to have the freedom to make mistakes and learn from them without disadvantage. A fun learning environment is non-threatening and the physical environment is stimulating, relevant, and conducive to promoting maximum learning. Natural learning is always Fun.

The philosophy and principles can be applied in several areas (we call elements) of training. By looking at the **structure** of the training, the **environment** that surrounds it, the **psychological** approaches and attitudes that affect adults, the **physical** and **social** aspects of the learning situation, and the **cognitive** involvement, and integrating these elements with the philosophy and principles taught in *The Quest: In Search of a Better Way Accelerated Learning Workshop*, the designer/developer/instructor can readily and easily incorporate an accelerated approach to training.

The workshop promotes, and is structured around, a learning facilitation model created by the Center for Performance Improvement based on the five "E's"— Engage, Establish Context, Explore/Expose, Experience, and Evaluate. (See Figure 1.)

### ENGAGE

Engaging the learner involves creating a positive, stimulating and creative environment. It addresses the learners needs and attitudes and sets the stage for upcoming learning events.

### ESTABLISH THE CONTEXT

This phase allows for review of previous learning. It also identifies the learning objectives and provides content organizers such as outlines or overviews to the learners. During this phase, the relevance is established heightening the learners interest and motivation.

### EXPOSE/EXPLORE THE CONTENT

Participants are exposed to the content through an imaginative, risk-free environment which ensures the integration of knowledge and skill using carefully planned learning events that incorporate multi-sensory and interactive activities.

### EXPERIENCE

This phase puts the knowledge into action. Participants use written, verbal, or physical demonstration to show acquired knowledge or behavior changes. This phase fosters continual learning and work/life improvement through application.

### EVALUATE

Provides an opportunity to celebrate the learning, demonstrate competence, and enhance retention. The evaluation phase allows participants to develop a plan to integrate the learning into their professional and personal lives.

The learner-centered philosophy, the principles, the elements, and the learning facilitation model are supported by the use of varied techniques that focus on reaching a variety of learning styles. Research indicates that using varied techniques will make learning more effective and therefore more efficient. All of these considerations make up Accelerated Learning. They can be used in group instruction or to develop a personal learning plan.

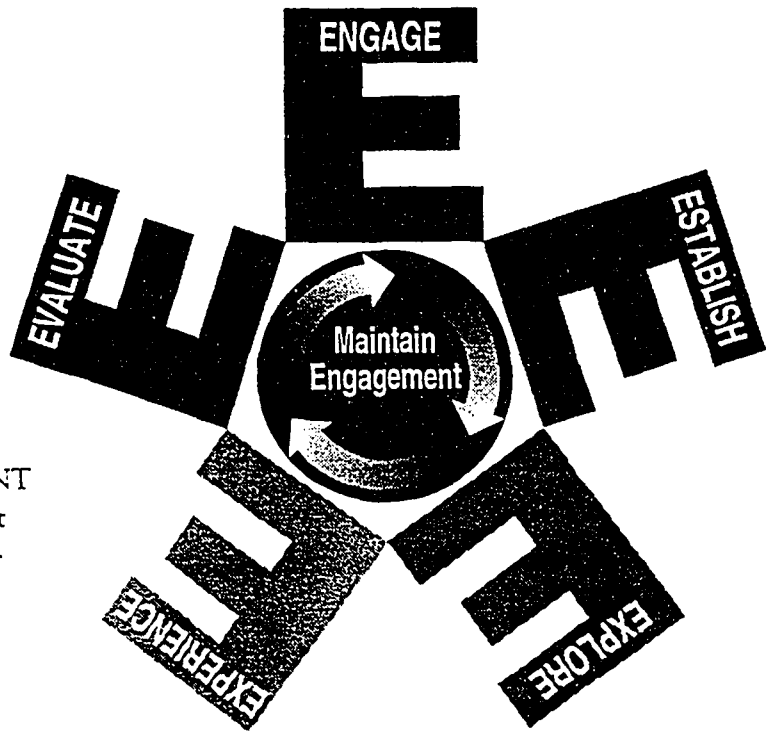
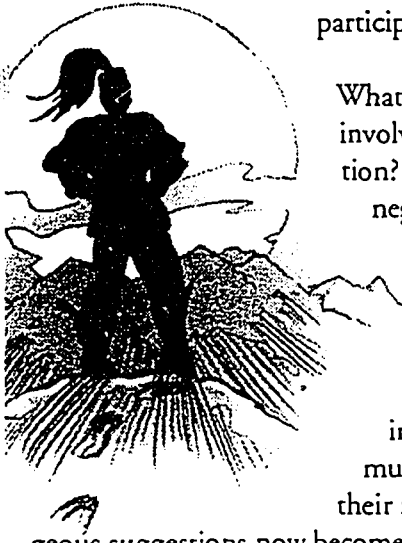


Figure 1

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## Experience

Imagine that your manager has asked you to provide training for all the company employees. The topic is not applicable to most of them, the task will not be required very often, requires specialized skills, and most people required to attend are going to be opposed to participating.



What will you do? How will you handle the diverse population that will be involved? How will you handle the differing ability levels of the population? How will you get people to participate? How will you address the negative attitude that is sure to be present?

In the workshop, participants are asked to solve a situation very much like this and are required to apply the learner-centered philosophy, the principles and elements, and certain techniques in their solution. Teams are placed in a simulated environment depicting the setting for the problem situation, including appropriate mood music and sound effects. This imaginary, mythical environment allows their minds to run free and anything becomes possible. The most outrageous suggestions now become plausible. This freedom and the fun it generates allows them to create solutions that never would have seemed feasible. One team solved this problem in the following manner. Picture this scenario.

## The Gorge of Eternal Torment Scenario

"With the recent rumors of an enemy siege and rumblings of a hostile castle coup, His Excellency, the King, has proclaimed that all loyal subjects, regardless of station, status, position, or duty shall receive annual "Cauldrons of Boiling Oil" training. His majesty wants to ensure that everyone is capable of manning the hot oil stations at the castle walls should an enemy threat arise. This law will be implemented immediately and will be strictly enforced. Complaints from dwarfs, servants, maidens, princesses, hunchbacks, one-armed or one-legged subjects, and peasants will be ignored."

First the teams are asked to determine the training problem and then to create a solution. They are free to use anything they want,



but they are required to use the Flexible principle, the Psychological element, and the techniques of Action Learning, Team Learning, Field Trip, and Course Theme. This is how one team solved the problem.

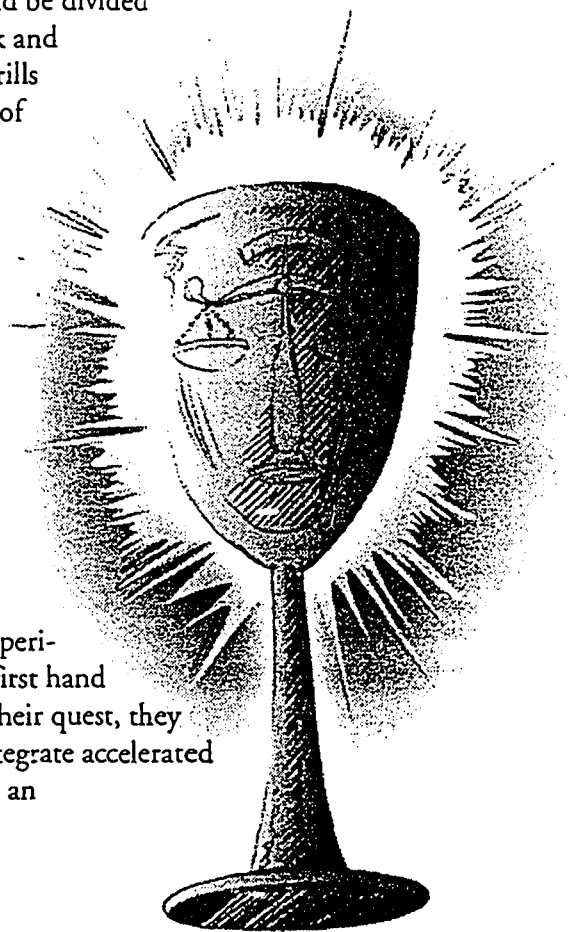
The team first determined three issues which needed to be addressed. The first, training a diverse population, second, the potential ethical problem of pouring hot oil on people (even if they are the enemy), and third, dealing with a handicapped population. The training problems to be confronted were: learners and their attitudes about being forced into training and the "it's not my fight syndrome" and resentment at being treated as objects (fighting tools).

Using the Flexibility principle, they decided first that the training would be by task so that all segments of the diverse population could receive training and qualification in any areas where all could be expected to participate as well as those limited by individual handicaps. A pre-training exercise using a Field Trip (a technique) to the physical location (also incorporating the Environmental and Fun elements) for a walk-around get-acquainted view of the work location would be implemented. Next, a simulation exercise would be provided, using the Psychological element to deal with the potential ethical inhibition against pouring hot oil on the enemy, to reduce anxiety, and to provide for safety. In this simulation, water would be poured down on the kingdom's surplus population of cats. To gain individual commitment, emotional appeal would be invoked by discussing the potential loss of their homes and their fear of the king's wrath when his law was not implemented. Different tasks, such as heating oil, carrying firewood, hoisting and lifting cauldrons, etc. would be assigned to different teams of heterogenous groups (Social element) according to their abilities. This provides for Team Learning and adds an element of competition among teams, enhancing performance accuracy and response time. Additionally, the benefits of winning the battle against the invaders was used as an incentive. The spoils of war would be divided among all, new serfs would be available to help with work and they may even be the master of some. These simulated drills and the team competition would soon bring all elements of the workforce up to speed and able to do their part in protecting the castle from invading forces. Frequent use of these simulated drills would also be used for continuing training.

The team achieved victory with their solution to the scenario. There have been many such creative solutions to the five different workshop scenarios, each with their own unique training problems.

## Evaluate

The final victory of this medieval quest goes to the participants who discover the value of using accelerated learning in their professional and personal lives. They experience the benefits and advantages of accelerated learning first hand in a risk-free environment. And near the conclusion of their quest, they actually conceive and design training proposals which integrate accelerated learning concepts and techniques and provide them with an



understanding of how to influence others to explore the realm of possibilities offered through accelerated learning.

As you near the end of your quest for the golden chalice of learning, we ask you to reflect on the value of your journey.

*Ask yourself, what if . . .*

*Safety issues were significantly reduced because training is so effective?*

*Expensive retraining isn't necessary?*

*Participants learned more in less time?*

*Participants retained more information longer?*

*Participants were more receptive to mandatory training?*

*Training consistently resulted in improved performance?*

*Could I learn more, faster, with greater retention?*

*Could I help others in my organization accomplish the same goal?*

We believe you can achieve the golden chalice of learning through accelerated learning. We believe you can create training that works, that meets the needs of the job, that captures the learner, that imbeds the learning into long term memory, that allows the learner to transfer the learning to the job, and that equips the learner with tools to continue to improve his/her professional performance and personal life.

*What do you think?*

*Are these ideas something you can use either professionally or personally?*

*Do these ideas support the current needs of your work group? Your company?*

*Are you ready to learn more about accelerated learning and the ways it can be implemented?*