ELEARNINGNEWS ARTICLE

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Accelerated learning: what it is and what benefits it offers

How does accelerated learning support students' educational success? How to apply this methodology to an online course?

The **theory of Accelerated Learning (AL)** is based on the idea that knowledge is not something that must be absorbed by the student but, on the contrary, something that the student must actively create and construct.

According to this methodology, therefore, an effective training course must be **learner-centered** and based on **active learning**, rather than being teacher-centered and merely presenting the topics on the syllabus. This is the only way for students to learn quickly, effectively, and engagingly.

Accelerated learning vs. traditional learning: the differences

When it was first theorized, accelerated learning was a break from the principles of traditional learning. Specifically, AL aims to build learning pathways through a **social and emotional approach**, supporting the idea that students learn best by socializing and interacting in positive environments and real-life settings.

So, while **traditional training** is based on primarily auditory learning (where responsibility for learning goals and outcomes rests with the teacher), accelerated learning engages all sensory modalities, stimulating all students regardless of their **learning style**.

The result is the construction of an interactive learning experience that facilitates knowledge retention and improves the performance of all types of students.

Accelerated learning: the importance of the learning environment

According to accelerated learning theorists, emotions strongly influence learning. In particular, **positive emotions** contribute to reinforce the acquisition of knowledge, while negative ones (such as anxiety and fear) block it. Hence the importance given to the **learning environment** and the need to make it a relaxed and engaging space.

In this perspective, it will be important to create a climate that fosters the **identity and individuality of each student** and discourages any attempt at homogenization: all students should feel an active part of the group and feel that their contribution is valued.

The basic principles of accelerated learning

Learning must involve all sensory modalities

Good instructional design must begin with a thorough understanding of **how the human mind works**. People, in fact, learn more effectively if they are sensory stimulated on several fronts, involving all sensory modalities (visual, auditory and kinaesthetic).

In the case of an eLearning course, therefore, it will be necessary to provide a blended teaching approach that responds to the peculiarities of each style, as well as to include video, audio, moments of social interaction and all those teaching strategies useful to satisfy each type of student.

Learning is creation, not consumption

Learning is not the **passive absorption** of knowledge, but something that the student must construct internally in an active way. In other words, students learn from what they do and not from observing what the teacher does.

For this reason, it will be essential to include in the course moments in which students can **put into practice the theoretical notions** learned: role-plays, simulations, laboratories, etc.. This will help them take control of their own learning experience, provided, however, that they are constantly guided by the teacher who, through continuous feedback, will continually direct them through the training process.

Collaboration helps learning

Because human beings are essentially social creatures, learning is most effective when it leads to cooperation among peers (**peer education**).

To create an environment conducive to learning, a collaborative climate must be fostered in which students are encouraged to cooperate and interact positively, without competition.

Learning occurs on many levels simultaneously

Good learning involves people at multiple levels simultaneously, not necessarily in a linear way. This means that teachers should encourage students to connect their learning to what they already know about a topic, as well as to other subjects and possible real-life applications.

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