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Editorial

This issue brings together three great trainers who have had an enormous impact on the use of Accelerated Learning in the corporate world: Sivasailam Thiagarajan (Thiagi), Glen Capelli, and Bob Pike. Over the years, I have attended workshops at IAL conferences led by all three. In fact, I still use many of the activities and techniques I learned from them in my own teaching. This is why I am so pleased they have agreed to contribute to this issue.

We begin with a letter from Diane Marie Word, who in **The IAL Experience** expresses her excitement about IAL's upcoming conference, which will take place in Houston, Texas, January 15-18, 2009. I am sure after reading her letter you will decide to join us!

I am thrilled to announce that Thiagi will be a keynote speaker and presenter at our January conference. As a master trainer and developer of thousands of learning games, his energy and sense of humor are not to be missed. In **Participants Generate Questions**, Thiagi gives you a small preview of the creative ideas and techniques you can expect from him at the conference.

In **Some Lessons for Corporate Training**, professional speaker, author and songwriter Glen Capelli shares his compelling journey through Accelerated Learning and the satisfaction it has brought to him in his professional life.

In **Make Your Handouts Interactive and More Fun**, train the trainer expert Bob Pike shares many practical and useful hints for how to make your handouts as creative as your training.

In **Bringing Business English to Life**, Chris Price, who conducts business English training in England, shares two of the great activities she uses in her sessions.

Last but not least, in **An AL Journey through Canada, the U.S. and the UK**, Australian professor Margaret Yoon shares a personal account of a trip she took to research the use of Accelerated Learning in three different countries.

I look forward to reconnecting with all of you in Houston next January. Until then, I hope you enjoy reading this issue of **IMAGINE!**

Bonnie Tsai
Editor

The IAL Conference Experience

By Diane Marie Word



I think as practicing educators, we can agree that learning is not an event but a lifelong experience. How often do we hold ourselves accountable for our own learning experiences? When is the last time you networked with other learning professionals?

The IAL Conference is a learning experience plus a wonderful opportunity to network with others from around the world. I want to show you the benefits of this conference using the Accelerated Learning cycle.

The first phase of any educational experience is to engage our minds and hearts before we learn. Therefore, please take a moment to read about the experiences that attendees had at the 2008 conference. You can find these on IAL's website at: www.ialearn.org/past1.php

To get your momentum going even more, be sure to look at the pictures. Take a look at the faces, and I challenge you to find anyone who is not having fun!

Now that your mind and heart are ready for more excitement, let's look at the second phase.

The connection phase allows you to connect with the learning material at many levels. Remember, this is the "emotional hook." What better hook than to look at the program for this year's conference. It is our most exciting ever! You can find the brochure online at: <http://www.ialearn.org/C-Program.php>

What is especially great about this conference is that you can pick from several different tracks. There are some excellent speakers for the general sessions, too. Don't forget to look at the pre and post conference workshops. What an opportunity to learn by attending these!

The third phase, creative presentation, can only happen at the conference. I guarantee you will be highly engaged! (I have learned more at this conference than from any other I have ever attended.) Don't forget that it's important to step outside of your box and try something new, too. Last year, I attended a session on movement, and I now use what I learned in my teaching. Each session is carefully designed for the audience to experience the learning process and is a wonderful demonstration of Accelerated Learning at its best!

The activation phase is the time to apply what you learned. I attended many sessions last year where activation was a key component of the learning experience. This makes it so much easier when you get home and apply it on the job.

The integration, reflection and celebration phase is bittersweet for me. It means the conference is closing and I will not see my colleagues for another year. On the sweet side, though, I walk away with a strong sense of accomplishment and an eagerness to step back into the *real* world and apply everything I learned.

Conference 2009 is *your* time to lift off and learn. See you soon in Houston!

About Diane

As an Instructional Designer for Giant Eagle, Diane has many years of experience with Accelerated Learning. A long-time IAL member, she founded the IAL Pennsylvania Chapter, where she serves as President. Diane is also a member of the national ASTD organization and has recently been appointed to the ASTD Pittsburgh board. She also consults with colleges and universities in Pennsylvania.

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Asking Participants to Generate Questions

By Sivasailam Thiagarajan (Thiagi)



In this article, I would like to explore the advantages of letting participants generate training content. I will also describe some training games and activities for leveraging these advantages.

In many training situations, however, participants may not have the experience or the expertise to generate useful and valid content. Therefore, I explore strategies for encouraging participants to generate questions—and for using these questions—in training sessions.

Which Trainer Would You Prefer?

Let's pretend that you are a participant in three different training sessions. Meet your three trainers:

Alan, the first trainer, lectures on the training topic without any interruption. You participate by listening to the lecture.

Barbara, the second trainer, gives a short lecture on the training topic and follows it up with a question-and answer session. You participate by listening to the lecture, asking questions, and listening to Barbara's answers to your questions and other participants' questions.

Charlie, the third trainer, gives a brief lecture on the training topic. He then asks participants to work in teams and generate questions based on the content he presented. Later, he uses participants' questions in a quiz contest.

Which of these three trainers would you prefer?

If you are like me (and most participants), you will find Barbara and Charlie to be more engaging and effective than Alan. I am not suggesting that participants don't like the no-nonsense trainer who gives a straight lecture on the training topic. All I am suggesting is that inviting participants to generate questions (and incorporating them into the training process) results in more interesting and effective training.

Two Types of Questions

Both Barbara and Charlie invited participants to generate questions on the training topic. However, they elicited two different types of questions:

- I don't know the answers, but I'd like to know them.

Barbara's participants asked their questions because they did not know—and wanted to find out—the answers. These questions are based on ignorance and curiosity. They provide an instant needs analysis.

- I know the answers and I want to test others.

Charlie's participants asked questions for which they knew the answer. These questions are useful for a review or a test. The participants act as co-designers and help Charlie with additional training tools.

Advantages of Asking Questions

Inviting participants to ask questions encourages them to actively participate in the learning process. If you are a trainer like Barbara, answering questions generated by the current set of participants makes use of the proven principles of learner-controlled training. This approach helps you avoid explaining things that participants already know.

If you are a trainer like Charlie, asking participants to generate questions on recently-learned content and then competing in a quiz contest is a much more effective way to review material than simply repeating the same presentation one more time.

After the training session, when you review, organize, and analyze the questions generated by participants, you get different types of indirect—but useful—feedback. For example:

- Participants ask the most questions from the topics that they clearly understood and consider important.
- Participants do not ask questions about the topics they do not clearly understand or consider unimportant.
- Participants ask “incorrect” questions about topics that they do not understand.

While my subject-matter experts and I can generate several valid questions about the training topic, participants generate more authentic questions. The intriguing twists in the content and format of participant-generated questions frequently make me exclaim, “I never thought of that!”

Some of the questions generated by participants at the beginning of the training session effectively capture the participants' mental pictures. Subject-matter experts cannot duplicate this feat because they have lost their naiveté when it comes to thinking about the training topic.

Disadvantages of Asking Questions

Asking participants to generate questions for use in a training session is not without dangers and pitfalls. For example:

- Learners may come up with naïve, shallow, and trivial questions because they don't know what they don't know.

Providing some foundational knowledge, advanced organizer, or conceptual framework before turning participants loose on producing their questions can reduce this pitfall.

- A question from a beginning participant may be of great interest and use to her. But other participants may find it to be boring and irrelevant to their needs.

When we invite participants to generate review and test questions on topics that they have mastered, we may end up with redundant and poorly worded questions. We have to invest time and effort to sort through the questions, remove duplicates, eliminate trivia, and add questions from ignored topics to provide balanced coverage.

- Some participants may indulge in a sadistic binge by constructing tough questions to stump their cohorts and to show off their mastery of esoteric information.

Reviewing, organizing, selecting, and editing questions from different participants is a time-consuming process. If you are planning to incorporate the questions in a subsequent quiz contest or some other type of review and practice games, you may have to give the participants a break while you clean up their questions.

An Effective Solution

Here's a more effective strategy that I have used in this situation to avoid the delay.

When I collect the question cards from the current set of participants, I tell them something like this: "I am going to go through the questions, sort them out, organize them, and select the questions that cover all the important content. This process may take some time. To get us into the next activity, I am going to use a set of questions generated by previous participants. Before my next training session, I will expand this set to include your questions."

Having a previous collection of valid questions that sample different topics enables you to invite participants to generate questions while avoiding delays in cleaning them up. The first time you use this approach, you have to use your own questions. Later, you can systematically replace them with effective and valid questions from participants.

About the Author

Sivasailam Thiagarajan, Ph. D., started his consulting business in 1976 from his basement. Now, 30 years later, he continues to operate the same business in pursuit of the same mission: helping people achieve more through performance-based training that is motivating and effective. Thiagi and his team share two things in common: 1) a rigorous research-based academic background and 2) many years of real-world, hands-on experience in designing and conducting training for corporate clients around the world.

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Some Lessons for Corporate Training

By Glen Capelli



In 1989 I was blessed to receive a Sir Winston Churchill Study Fellowship that enabled me to fly from Perth, Western Australia (the most isolated capital city in the world) to Ames, Iowa, to study Accelerative Learning at Iowa State University.

One of the great founding figures of Suggestive Accelerative Learning Techniques—Dr Donald Schuster—was a professor there at the time. As part of my course, I presented a piece on Thinking Skills; after seeing my presentation, Don asked me to give it again at the SALT Conference in Chicago in 1990.

Sometimes simple questions change your life.

From 1990 onwards, I was able to attend 10 of the next twelve SALT (and then IAL) Conferences. Each created ripples of learning that continue to resonate today. Here are a few of the ripples that relate to my everyday experience now as a professional speaker delivering keynote speeches at conferences and as a trainer delivering such programs as Dynamic Leadership Thinking and Creative Presentation Skills.

AL Course Design Lessons

In 1991, I had the opportunity to train with Dr. Georgi Lozanov and Dr. Evelyn Gateva in Seattle, Washington. This taught me the marvel of great design. I learned that delivery is one thing, but having a great program design first is the foundation.

While Dr. Gateva was presenting, I took notes on her elaboration process. I loved the seemingly effortless way she would introduce new material and then re-visit it in a variety of ways without the process ever seeming like a drill. Each activity or game—role-play, physical movement or conversation—that we played was never trivial. Instead, it was a wonderful blend of fun and purpose.

One of the lessons I learned from this is that folks will do stuff if it is meaningful to them. How we frame activities, games and physical learning pieces is vital.

Another lesson I learned is how to design using both repetition and variety. I learned to use many different styles of learning,

re-loop to the main messages, and constantly build and reinforce the learning.

Mix It Up

A year or two after Seattle, I attended the Accelerated Learning Conference in Minneapolis. I have especially fond memories of Robert Sternberg, who took the stage several times to mix great humor with great content. Of the many things that stuck in my mind from Bob's wonderful "Stand-Up Intellectual Comedy" routine was the t-shirt he wore with the words *IQ matters but not that much* emblazoned on it.

The slogan is based on Bob's research, which shows that intelligence depends less on IQ and more on a mixture of three types of Smarts:

- Creative Smarts
- Analytical Smarts
- Practical Smarts

Today, whenever I design a speech or create a training program, I work hard to blend the Creative, Analytical and Practical into it. I also throw Emotional Smarts into the brew as well.

Another lesson from my AL training is to honor your content with your method and vice versa. If you are teaching Emotional Smarts, then the training method should display the emotionally smart components. (I once presented at a conference in Washington, D.C., whose theme was Honoring Diverse Learning Styles. Unfortunately, it opened with a 2½ hour lecture that didn't honor diverse learning styles at all!)

Laura Nyro and the Nitty-Grittys

My AL training also taught me the need to include what I refer to as the *Nitty-Gitty* (based on my love of the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band) in each presentation. The Nitty-Grittys are the simple, immediately applicable pieces of learning—the down to earth things that people immediately catch and incorporate into their vocabulary and behavior.

To understand what I mean by this, let me tell you about the singer-songwriter Laura Nyro.

Laura Nyro never performed at a SALT or IAL conference, yet from what I have learned of her I am sure she would have loved the mix of minds that make up the Accelerative Learning Community. In the 49 years of her short and creative life, she gave us many great tunes, including *The Wedding Bell Blues* (anyone remember the 5th Dimension?) and *Stony End*, which was recorded by Barbara Streisand and others.

Most importantly, she wrote the song that has most influenced my life: *And When I Die*. Not only do I love this song, which was a 1969 hit for Blood, Sweat and Tears, but it also has all of the elements needed for designing great corporate training

sessions. For example, it has a:

- Simple start
- Solo voice at first
- Single instrument that becomes many
- Pace that goes fast and slow and builds over time
- Rhythm that pauses at times and has moments of silence
- Pattern that repeats the main messages
- Mixture of styles that even includes a bit of country and western
- Yee Hah moment
- Big theme
- Mix of grand and simple elements
- Surprise ending—you think it is done, and then you find out there is more
- Reflective piece
- Big finish

In other words, *And When I Die* is like an active concert that demonstrates to us how we should design great learning modules.

From this we learn never to underestimate the power of a single mind and the seeds left behind. Laura Nyro was 17 when she wrote this song, including the words "And when I'm dead, dead and gone, there'll be one child born in this world to carry on, to carry on."

When we leave a training room, we need to ensure that we have planted seeds that are going to carry on.

Less Is Sometimes More

Although Laura's song has many different elements, it does not seem cluttered. In my early years as a trainer, I wanted everyone in the room to get everything that I had, so I put everything into my hour, day or week's presentation. Phew!

The great Charles Connolly, one of the founding figures of Accelerative Learning, was the first to gently suggest to me that "less is often more." The song *And When I Die* has moments of silence and understands the power of the pause. Folks and their brains need some light and shade, some on and off, some gentle and intense. So do corporate training programs.

For me, humor and music are wonderful tools with which to open up minds so they are able to soak in some learning. This doesn't mean that we have to be comedians when we present, it just means that we honor the laughter in a room. There is great energy in a smile, and there can be great community in a shared chuckle.

Over the years, I have learned to lighten up as a person and presenter. I have also begun to realize that every moment does

not have to be chocker block full. Ironically, when you allow space it generates more volume and more depth.

The overall lesson is that corporate training sessions—be they for an hour, a day, a five-day retreat or an on-line 90-second learning primer—need to honor and respect folks' hearts, minds and neurons in all their diversity.

My life would be so less rich without my years of involvement and sharing with the Accelerative Learning and Learning Styles communities. Thank you all.

About The Author

An author, songwriter, radio and television presenter and creator of the Dynamic Thinking Course for Leadership, Glenn Capelli delivers a message of creativity, innovation, and thinking smarter to audiences around the world. His ability to bring together meaningful learning and laughter is the key to his successful presentation style.

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Make Your Handouts Interactive & More Fun

By Bob Pike



Handouts are a great way to reinforce the information covered in your training. To make them useful, however, they need to be as effective as possible.

In this article, I share some of the guidelines that we teach our clients to use when preparing their presentation handouts.

Overall Design Guidelines

Use no more than two typefaces in a handout. More than this is distracting to the eye. Also be sure to make your handouts interactive. Having participants add a caption or fill in a key word will increase their attention, retention, and participation.

Use a border around each page. Just as an appropriate frame draws the eye to a painting, an appropriate border draws the participant into the handout.

Whenever possible, keep the left-hand page blank so that participants can capture their own ideas about the information on the right-hand page. To facilitate this, you might want to place a border around the left-hand page with the header *Notes*.

Be sure to number each page of your handouts sequentially because it's easier to find a handout by page number than by title.

Use appropriate icons and graphics to help people visualize your printed content. For example, I might use a light bulb icon (or lightning bolt) in the upper right-hand corner of the border if the topic on the page relates to brainstorming or ideas.

Basic Sections

Divide your handout into two or three sections. At the very least be sure you include *Need to Know* and *References* (which can go in an appendix). It is also good to include *Nice to Know* whenever possible. This allows you to be sure that you cover the *Need to Know* and partially cover the *Nice to Know* and *Reference* material as time allows. If you use any fill-in-the-blanks items, make sure they occur only in the *Need to Know* section.

Your Bio

Include your biographical sketch on the second or third page of the handout. Be sure you tell your audience *why* you have the right to present on this subject. Always personalize your bio sketch to the audience.

For example, if I'm presenting to an audience of technical people, I include examples of technical projects I've worked on. If the audience is sales or customer relations oriented, I replace the technical information with sales or customer service information.

Your Evaluation Form

Also be sure to include one or two of your own evaluation forms in the back. This gives you the option of having the group evaluate your presentation even if other forms are not provided.

Introduce the evaluation form early. Within the first third of the program, I make sure people know about the evaluation form, where to find it, and the fact that I would like it thoroughly completed by the end of the session. I usually offer a bonus handout that participants receive when they turn it in.

Incorporate Variety into Your Handouts

There are at least ten types of handouts that you can use:

1. **Partial transparency.** This is a reproduction of a visual, but it has several key words missing that need to be filled in by the participant.

2. **Open-ended sentences.** These allow participants to express their ideas or viewpoints by completing sentences that have been started. For example: People will work hard if _____

3. **Projects.** These are series of questions that allow participants to explore thoughts, feelings and ideas about a topic. They are done in a group of five to seven with a group leader leading the discussion.

4. **Case studies.** You can describe a situation on a handout and then ask participants to discuss a series of questions related to it. An alternative is to describe a problem and ask participants to come up with solutions.

5. **Effectiveness Grids.** Place a series of qualities or characteristics related to the topic on a grid and ask participants to rate themselves, usually in terms of their perceived level of expertise or effectiveness. This allows participants to select areas they need to develop; it also allows potential mentors to emerge from the group.

6. **Charts and graphs.** Because they are visual, these help participants see relationships much more clearly than text only. Make sure you do not distort the data by inadvertently truncating it. By using the same proportions for all of your data, you'll minimize the possibility of this happening.

7. **Diagrams.** These help participants visualize the steps in a process or a sequence of events much more clearly than text only.

8. **Crossword puzzles, word-search puzzles, and other paper and pencil games.** These are a fun way to engage participants and get them actively working on an issue.

9. **Checklists (like this one).** These also make good handouts.

10. **Bibliographies.** These can be a useful resource for participants who would like more information.

About Bob

Through his company, the Bob Pike Group, Bob has provided train the trainer workshops and consulting services to individuals and corporations for more than 30 years. He is the creator of the Participant-Centered Instructional System, which applies complete design, delivery, and class management components to performance-based outcomes to strengthen the business relationship between a company's business objectives and its training department.

For more information, go to:

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Bringing Business English to Life

By Chris Price



Using real people and real situations brings business English to life for both participants and trainers. We live in the real world. Why use imaginary people and companies when we have the Internet at our fingers?

In this article, I'd like to share with you two activities I use in the classroom that draw on real-world information: *Rich List* and *Fast Track Companies*.

Rich List Activity

This activity asks participants to role play a person from the Rich List, which is published every year in London by *The Sunday Times*.

The list names the 2000 richest people in Britain, the 100 wealthiest people in the world, the top 100 wealthiest in Europe, and the richest Asians in Britain. This publication and the website are very useful to the Business English trainer. To access it, go to: www.timesonline.co.uk/richlist

Activity Steps

1. First choose one person from the Rich List for each of your participants. (Some of the people I have used recently include Lakshmi Mittal, Roman Abramovich, Duke of Westminster, Sri Hinduja, Ernesto Bertarelli, Hans Rausing, Sean Quinn, Nicky Oppenheimer, Anil Agarwal, Bernie Ecclestone, and J.K. Rowling.)

Use Internet research to prepare an information sheet on each rich person. Give one name from this list, along with the corresponding information sheet, to each of your participants to role play. (You can also assign a name to each participant and ask them to do their own Internet research and note taking as preparation for the next lesson.)

2. Ask participants to make a business card and name label for themselves using the name of their rich person.

3. Prepare the participants for role playing by discussing and writing on the board useful social English expressions for joining, questioning, responding, hedging, stalling, and leaving politely.

The Cocktail Party

Set the stage by telling your participants that they have been invited to a cocktail party at a major business conference. Their task is to mix and mingle with each other in order to learn more about each other, including information about their personal interests, careers and companies.

Also explain that you will act as the hospitality steward who serves guests pre-dinner drinks and finger food. (This allows you to circulate around the room while silently monitoring the conversations and—if necessary—prompting people who are having difficulty conversing.)

Ask participants to speak in detail to at least three other people. Also ask them to mentally remember the information they receive because it is rude to make notes or jot things down on the back of business cards while they are talking.

Set a time limit of 15 minutes for the speaking activity, being sure to give the guests enough time to meet and greet each other before you begin to circulate.

Follow-up Activities

You can follow up the role play with a variety of activities. For example, you can ask participants to:

- Write up their notes individually and then discuss their findings in small groups.
- Write an email to their senior management giving any useful information or contacts they might have found interesting.
- Give a mini-presentation as an overview of the character they represented.
- Discuss in groups what makes these people successful in the marketplace.
- Build up a vocabulary bank of business expressions resulting from group discussions. Examples might include: *underpinned by strategic thinking, leading from the front, proven track record, ability to inspire others, a customer-focused mindset, outstanding communication and negotiating skills, motivated, niche market opportunities, risk-taker, breath of vision, analytical and intellectual ability, etc.*

Fast Track Companies Activity

This activity asks participants to use the Internet to research, trace, track and forecast real companies that are making headlines as being successful in the private sector. To locate such companies, go to www.fasttrack.co.uk/tasttrack2002

Preparation

Similar to the previous exercise, you can either research successful companies yourself and prepare information sheets on them for each of your participants, or you can assign a company and website to each student (or group) and ask them to research the companies themselves.

In selecting the companies to use for this activity, you may want to choose those that are in similar trading areas so they

all have something in common. (This is only a suggestion because the activity works equally well without trading links.)

In preparing for this exercise, be sure to check the vocabulary in the readings and teach the common phrases and social expressions that are regularly used in them.

Follow-up Activities

You can follow up the reading and research step with a variety of activities. For example, you can ask participants to:

- Put together graphs, facts and figures about their company so they can present it to the group.
- Track their company throughout the business year, predict its movement in the Fast Track over the next five years, and make a presentation about their findings.

- Write a brief article for a trade magazine about some aspect of their company.
- Phone their company to give them the news that it is the winner of a special business award for excellence. Include information about their competitors and the celebrations that evening.

About the Author

Chris lives with her husband in Dover, England, near the famous white cliffs. She develops and teaches customized English courses for business people and is associated with Pilgrims in Canterbury, England. At the moment she is enjoying being a grandmother to two small babies and spending as much time as she can in the South of Spain, where she has a second home. To contact Chris, go to: chrismprice@onetel.com

An AL Journey through Canada, the U.S., and the UK

By Margaret Yoon



In 2007, I was awarded the Churchill Fellowship, which is an award given by the Sir Winston Churchill Memorial Trust to enable Australians from all walks of life to pursue their search for excellence overseas. My goal was to investigate the impact of

Accelerative Learning techniques in schools in Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom.

Arriving in Victoria, British Columbia

I set off from Perth on the 6th of January 2008. After a 17-hour flight from Sydney, I landed in Victoria, British Columbia and discovered to my horror that my luggage had not arrived with me! Another problem occurred due to a confusion with two cities named *Vancouver*.

I learned to my chagrin that there is a Vancouver in British Columbia, Canada, and another one in the United States in the state of Washington. My scheduled visit to a middle school in *Vancouver* had to be abandoned because my host thought I was in Vancouver, Washington—but I was actually 300 kms away in Vancouver, B.C.!

From British Columbia, I headed to Regina, Saskatchewan, and its vast, snow-covered plains. In January, the nighttime temperatures regularly sank to minus 25°C; the locals considered the daytime temperatures to be “very nice and normal” for that time of year: between minus 12° C and 14° C!

Although this Australian found the below freezing tempera-

tures and wind chill to be unforgiving, the schools I visited (Le Boldus High, St. Matthews and Riffle High School) had the warmest ethos, and my hosts had hearts of gold. They went out of their way to make me feel welcome and gave me great insight into how their schools operated and what they did to create an optimal climate for successful learning.

On to Texas

After thanking my hosts, I left Saskatchewan and headed to Texas. As I traveled in a super shuttle bus from Dallas to Plano, I suddenly heard my alarm clock, which was packed safely in my suitcase, go off! I was embarrassed no end to have to ask the driver to stop along the freeway so I could look for the clock and turn off the dreaded continuous “beep,” which was driving another fellow passenger mad.

There wasn’t much to see in Dallas other than Southfork Ranch and the usual plasticity of commercial, urbanized enterprises. But the Accelerated Learning programs that the Plano District had implemented to teach English to new arrivals were something to be experienced and have to be witnessed to be believed!

This was exactly what I had come for, and what I saw there truly affirmed my belief in the possibilities and viability of the AL method of teaching. Many students arrive in Plano with no English whatsoever, yet within 6 weeks they are communicating fluently and comprehending what they read. They use AL to learn English, math, science and social studies, and they have heaps of fun doing so!

Final Stop: United Kingdom

After leaving the United States, I headed to the United Kingdom. The train station in Cramlington in the northeast of England was just like a bus stop in Perth: There were no taxis and no buses, and my bed and breakfast accommodation was two kilometers away! (Passengers who got off the train with me said they walked everywhere.)

Thankfully, the school I visited, Cramlington High, made my trip to this isolated place worthwhile. Its use of AL in its “Learning to Learn” program was one of the best I have ever seen. The school is rated among the top ten in the United Kingdom mainly because of its fantastic academic achievements. However, the deputy head teacher would emphatically say that the program is not about academic achievement but about teaching students how to be better learners.

My next stop was an inner city school near Manchester, England. Although getting up at 5:30 a.m. on a cold, dark winter’s morning to catch the train to Ashton-Under-Lyne and then walking 1.5 kms to Stamford High was not exactly my idea of fun, my efforts were duly rewarded when I witnessed AL’s impact on the students.

The school has seen a significant reduction in poor behavior since adopting AL. The students I spoke with told me proudly and confidently how the program had helped them to be better, more successful students. They proudly told me that they

used the 5 R’s (Responsibility, Resilience, Reasoning, Respect and Reflection) as goalposts to help them learn.

Conclusions

The entire experience was profound and empowering for me, and it was one I could not get here in Australia. The study tour has further confirmed my own research findings on the possibilities and viability of the AL method of learning and teaching. It is now my goal to empower others and to use AL to help invigorate learning in schools in Australia.

About the Author

Margaret Yoon, Ph.D., coordinates the Society and Environment Learning Area at St. John XXIII College in Mt. Claremont, Western Australia. The purpose of the program is to develop students’ understanding of how individuals and groups live together and interact with their environment. Students develop respect for cultural heritage and a commitment to social justice, the democratic process and ecological sustainability.

To learn more about the college, go to: [John XXIII College](#)

To read Margaret’s official report regarding her findings from her AL tour, go to: [The Impact of Accelerated Learning Techniques in Schools-UK, Canada, USA](#)

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