


## What is Accelerated Learning?



You see colorful posters on the walls. Music is playing. You find participants working in groups, playing memory or a board game to learn the materials of their content area. Or, perhaps, participants are developing a skit, creating learning activities to teach other groups, putting together magazine cut-outs to make a collage to demonstrate good customer service.

You are in a learning program using Accelerated Learning, and Accelerated Learning is more than just the inclusion of music and the arts, more than playing learning games that are effective and fun, even more than designing learning to appeal to all learning styles. It is a method that begins with the premise that each person is capable of much, much more than they think is possible. AL assumes that our own limiting beliefs about ourselves, our abilities and learning itself often get in the way of our learning potential. In an AL classroom, the facilitator creates multiple opportunities for individual and group experiences that enable participants to move beyond those limiting beliefs and tap into their inner wisdom, their hidden potential. The facilitator, the learning environment and the design of the learning process are key determining factors in the success of learning and the development of the capacity to learn.

### The Facilitator

AL teachers or trainers act at all times as facilitators of learning. They create and support positive group dynamics and give attention to individuals and their needs. IAL places great importance on the personal development of the AL facilitator to become the kind of person who can create a learning space in which each person thrives. AL facilitators are comfortable with ambiguity, and can “read” the group and make good decisions about what is important at any given time in the learning process. They are people who are open to learning potential, and who open up possibilities. They challenge, coach, inspire and guide.

AL facilitators change roles easily to support learning. They can be actors/actresses on stage, great story-tellers and entertainers, and then, as easily take a step back and hand over the stage to the learners, support them in discovering their own answers, guide them in developing new questions and help them mastering the learning through experimentation and carefully orchestrated practice sessions.

To guide the learning process successfully, AL facilitators are trained to see, hear, and feel more of what is happening in the group. They develop sensory acuity or heightened observation skills and can use language and positive suggestion to support learning and development. In fact, the AL facilitator is so important that the training to become an IAL certified facilitator places equal importance on personal mastery and growth and to the development of the skills to use the tools of AL effectively.

### The Learning Environment

The facilitator creates and maintains a safe and stimulating learning environment. In an AL learning program, the space looks and feels different than in more traditional classrooms. Lighting, seating arrangements, wall space, and the materials used are all chosen or designed to create an environment that is aesthetically pleasing, interaction rich, and appealing to all learning styles. Participants see the important content on the walls. Music supports learning and retention. Movement and interaction with one another and the content is encouraged. The physical and emotional environment provide safety and invite learners to experiment and grow.

### The Learning Design

Accelerated Learning design appeals to all learning and processing styles. The AL cycle offers a template to design and facilitate that provides a framework for success. It enables facilitators to adjust their design to accommodate what is happening in the learning environment. The Accelerated Learning design is an open system that provides enough of the right kind of structure to give guidance and ensure success time and time again. You will find many different AL cycles using various names for the key elements. All of them include the preparation of the learner for the learning, activities that motivate and engage learners emotionally and mentally, the teaching of new content or processes in a way that involves learners through simulations, experiments, concert readings or other creative presentation forms. In the practice phases, you will find game-like activities that support participants in mastering the material from more facilitator supported to more learner-directed. To bring closure to the learning, you will find activities to allow learners to integrate the learning into their lives, to reflect on the learning and its relevance to them, and to celebrate success.

In the preparation stages, the AL design involves finding out what the limiting beliefs or suggestions of learners might be, and then carefully creating activities and an environment that de-suggests or helps learner move beyond their limiting mental models and expand their perspectives. During the learning process, the aware facilitator revises the design as needed, and creates possibilities to support the creation of new and empowering beliefs and mindsets.

The International Alliance for Learning is a non-profit professional membership organization for Accelerated Learning practitioners and others who wish to improve the quality of learning for all. The association provides resources, certification, and training and development opportunities for teachers, trainers, and facilitators. IAL's vision of a world where lifelong learning, joy and esteem are honored as universal human capabilities naturally leads the organization to constantly search for better ways to facilitate the learning process. IAL offers members and colleagues a network of educators and corporate trainers with innovative practices. We support individuals and organizations in creating learning

programs that make a difference in the lives of the learners at home and at work.

Founded in 1976 in Iowa as the Society of Accelerative Learning and Teaching (SALT), IAL has its roots in Georgi Lozanov's Suggestopedia. IAL promotes teaching and training that is carefully orchestrated and has the learner at the center. IAL supports teachers and facilitators in designing learning programs that engage learners in the learning process, provide an interaction rich, safe, and stimulating learning environment, and make learning transformational as learners move beyond limiting beliefs and tap into their inner potential.

### **IAL Certification**

IAL recently adopted a rigorous **three level certification program** to create and maintain the highest standards of Accelerated Learning facilitation and design. The program was developed over a period of many months and tapped into best practices in certification, the valuable input of expert AL practitioners from around the world, current research in learning and human development, and the highly successful German (DGSL) certification program implemented in 1991.

- Level I is the Practitioner Level for teachers and facilitators. It develops entry level competency and skills in AL facilitation and design.
- Level II is the Master Practitioner Level. The requirements of this level ensure a depth of understanding, skill and experience as an AL facilitator and/or designer.
- Level III is the Trainer Level. IAL requires the highest standards in AL design and facilitation, at least two years experience, and 200 hours of personal growth work and supervised teaching. Those recognized at Level III are certified by IAL to offer Level I training.

### **Training and Development Opportunities**

IAL holds an **annual conference** that brings together the best AL practitioners from around the world and offers the opportunity for attendees to develop skills and competency in Accelerated Learning. It is a unique network of corporate trainers, instructional designers, university and college instructors, and K-12 educators.

In IAL's growing regional chapters, programs are offered locally to support the training and develop of AL practitioners, offer the opportunity to share and learn together, and to influence decision makers in the community to embrace a new paradigm in learning.

### **Resources**

IAL offers teachers and facilitators many resources and practical tools. They include

**networking opportunities**, information on current **research** and best practices, a regular **newsletter**, a **professional journal**, mentoring and coaching, and various IAL publications. Members will have the opportunity to share their ideas, resources, and practical tips with others. Over the next year, IAL will be developing tools and templates to improve the quality of learning and making them available to our members.

#### **Membership and Member Benefits**

IAL provides a forum and a learning community for people who care about learning and are dedicated to helping people discover their potential. Members have access to a growing number of resources in our “members only” section. As a member, you will receive **discounts** on training programs, our annual conference, local events, and many products from our partner organizations.

IAL members can take advantage of all the benefits of our affiliated organizations in the Germany, Mexico, and the United Kingdom. Through the association, members can obtain long term care insurance at a highly reduced group rate, and we are working on many more cost savings and other support for our members.

Your **membership** and **sponsorship** are income tax deductible. The contribution supports our volunteers in doing their work to spread AL to mainstream education, support research, and create resources for our members to promote learning in the world.

Join us in making a difference!

International Alliance for Learning—[www.ialearn.org](http://www.ialearn.org)