

AL Adventures Part 4: June 2002

From Scotland to Seoul

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"You cannot teach people anything - you can only help them discover it within themselves". Galileo

As we have seen in the 3 preceding articles, a compelling way of understanding the power of Accelerative Learning is to examine our own most memorable learning experiences. We have decoded my Scottish Island experience using both AL and MI principles and thus gained an insight into the ingredients and the "design" of such an experience. (see NAF #1, #, 2,#3) And I invite you to do the same.

To recap, these ingredients: First, we examined the 6 Accelerated Learning principles which are present in highly effective learning contexts, namely : We do not know the limits of our potential; we are designed for learning; we learn best when we are relaxed ; we learn through all of our senses; we learn with both our conscious and unconscious minds and as Professor Georgi Lozanov demonstrated, everything suggests something.

Next, we explored Multiple Intelligence Theory which first identified 7 intelligences, namely: Visual/Spatial; Body/ Kinesthetic; Interpersonal ; Intrapersonal ; Musical Rhythmic ; Logical/ Mathematical and Verbal/ Linguistic. Recent research suggest there may be at least 3-4 more. The key point is that intelligence is multiple and we all have all. However, our preferences and strengths vary in our ability to use them.

Now, since this Scottish Island experience was in the 1960's our teacher would not have the knowledge of AL and MI theory and principles that we have today. What we have found though is that by applying these principles, to even the driest technical subject we have been able to create a similarly powerful learning experience. And we now have evidence of participants joyfully recalling their experience 2 years later.

Let's look at an early example where we built the principles into our program design. There are many presentation programs on the market but the question, as with all adult training, was how to make the learning so powerful that all participants could easily remember it and apply it in the world beyond the training room.

Conceptually, this meant skill-building to such a level that it was "wired" into the body and brain. It meant designing exercises to build those skills utilising all of our multiple

intelligences, in an environment that stimulated the senses and fed the unconscious mind with peripheral suggestions to reinforce the learning.

It meant finding ways to present content that engaged the participants fully in the experience. It meant discovering how best participants could work on their own material and yet be stretched and coached to a level of competence that would be generic and applicable to any material. It meant designing an experience to touch the hearts and the minds of participants. It meant ensuring they were so relaxed that the participants could not not learn. It meant building all of these things into the design. It meant also that as trainers we recognise the power of what our presence and behaviour suggests and the need for us therefore to develop ourselves as exemplars.

Through a great deal of experimentation with these principles, among others, Marianne Vincent, a founding AL specialist with People Potential, succeeded in designing a program that has now transformed the presentations of thousands of trainers, managers and others throughout the region and as far afield as Africa. An example of the transformative nature of this AL designed program is to be found in an experience of teaching this program in a community context a few years ago. I had the pleasure and the challenge of training 20 women members of a regional organisation, involving 4 different nationalities and language groups to speak to an audience of more than a 1000 people in three different Asian locations, the last of which was in Seoul.

Through the three days we spent together I saw, felt and heard the participants transform from being “merely factory workers” with little education to confident, competent presenters in class. As we have seen, this was no accident, but rather the outcomes of a systematically designed program. Off they went on their speaking tour to return as agreed for a follow-up session and evaluation 10 days later.

Their glowing faces revealed immediate evidence of their success and then they excitedly reported how they had achieved this. Throughout their week long speaking tour of three countries, they had continued to:

- ✓ rehearse their content in front of each other, despite language differences
- ✓ give and receive useful feedback using the distinctions taught in the program
- ✓ willingly review and adjust their presentations to make them more effective
- ✓ coach each other effectively

In other words they had created a supportive learning environment and culture that had begun in the classroom and that they had continued to apply throughout their project together. That they were able to do so was testimony to the program design.

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As you can see there were at least two sets of outcomes in this scenario: The experience of learning the relevant skills and their application beyond the program.

This example demonstrates the multiple benefits of designing training with AL and MI principles, not least of which is that the learning lasts and that the processes in themselves can become the basis for cultural change in individuals and groups which provides the building blocks for creating a learning organisation.

Another major benefit is that the training design does not rely on the whims and charisma of personality, and thus does not depend on one trainer. Rather, effective AL design enables the program to be taught very effectively by a facilitator, as in this instance, who was relatively new to it.

This article, along with others was published in NAF, Notes Among Friends, People Potential's own e-zine. See website link: www.peoplepotential.com

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