THE KEY
TO STUDY SKILLS

SIMPLE STRATEGIES TO DOUBLE YOUR READING, MEMORY, AND FOCUS

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www.keytostudy.com

The Key to Study Skills: Simple Strategies to Double Your Reading, Memory, and Focus

To our students from whom we learn daily
and
To the course graduates: each of you is a hero capable of changing the world.

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

PREFACE

Albert Einstein once said, "Insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result."

For years, I learned as I was taught in school. The techniques I learned worked, and I was getting great marks. I even finished a PhD in a good university. I believed I had a good set of techniques and skills for learning; however, there was only one problem. I really did not enjoy the process of learning.

When I married Anna, after a short courtship period, the truth became apparent. The amount of content I consumed was well below my potential. My brain was starving for stimulation.

Anna taught me how to get out of my comfort zone and read faster, remember more and help others. After 10 wonderful years with Anna, her mission is also my mission – help people to learn FAST, remember what they learn and achieve their creative potential.

In 2013 with help of Jonathan Levi, we mass-produced our method on https://www.udemy.com/superlearning-speed-reading-memory-techniques where tens of thousands of students learned the skills Anna and I teach. The course is also available as a book on http://www.amazon.com/Become-SuperLearner-Reading-Advanced-Memorization-ebook/dp/B00VI7ZBUS.

Each student was different, and I had to answer thousands of questions. In order to help the most people in the shortest amount of time, the answers to the questions were posted on my blog www.keytostudy.com. Another key advantage of the blog for our students is the ability to provide free training exercises http://www.keytostudy.com/examplary-training-schedule/.

Student would ask some great questions and I would answer on the blog. With time, I decided to consolidate many of the questions and answers from the blog into a practical book. The purpose is to:

- Encourage our students to continue improving their skills.
- Answer questions.
- Spur new thoughts and ideas to encourage growth.
- Explain more in depth the concepts taught in our course and book.

This book is for those who have tried using other books or courses teaching speedreading techniques, creative learning skills and memory techniques but failed. If the reader has never tried any other method, then you have before you a tested and

successful method of improvement. Anna and I do not promise greatness; however, our goal and heartfelt mission is to help remove some of the obstacles on your way to improving your learning speed, retention and reaching your creative potential.

This book was created by our great community of students who were willing to share their difficulties and successes. Anna and I have spent time in research and what we present is backed up by thorough research. I truly believe the methods, skills and techniques presented (along with diligent practice) will help you unlock your learning potential, increase your reading speed, improve your retention, and skyrocket your memorization skills.

INTRODUCTION

What information consumes is rather obvious: it consumes the attention of its recipients. - Herbert Simon

Read Faster and Remember More

Who wouldn't like to be able to read faster and remember more? In this knowledge and data-driven world, your overall productivity as a professional, student or businessperson depends on how efficiently you can ingest, digest and process the information and data coming at you from every possible direction. During the last two decades, there has not been an adequate means developed to better deal with incoming information and data, nor has there been development or serious attention devoted to the idea of how learning styles must evolve with the changing circumstances of the digital age.

Enter KeyToStudy, a new path-breaking methodology for faster learning, better retention and efficient information processing for everyone.

Results on Two Levels

The KeyToStudy methodology works and produces results on two different levels.

Level 1: The first level is the ***framework***, which is the foundation of the overall philosophy of attention appropriation.

Level 2: The second level is a collection of ***techniques, practices and exercises*** built on the foundation of the *framework*.

It is imperative our students understand the difference between the Level 1 foundation of the framework/philosophy, and Level 2 technique/practice/exercise of the system. A clear grasp of the concepts in Level 1 will shorten the time needed to learn the methodology itself, and Level 2 will expedite the acquisition of the methodology.

Efficiency In Reading

Efficiency in reading boils down to two basic parameters:

1. **Reading speed**: Number of words per minute read

2. **Retention**: Retention measured in percentage of text recalled

The philosophy behind both parameters is based on several principles   clarity, intention and mindfulness. Without truly understanding these principles, the techniques explained in this book will only produce shallow and temporary results at best.

KeyToStudy Principles

The KeyToStudy principles are:

- **Clarity**: Clarity is simply the determining the purpose of the text from its title and deriving certainty from it.

- **Intention**: Intention is reading with a purpose and ensuring the reading is conscious, intentional and not careless.

- **Mindfulness**: Keep the title of the text in mind and read with a certain presence of mind.

When the student understands 80% of all reading is simply purposefully looking at the text, and, an equally big chunk of remembering is connecting new information to previously known information, *a transformative change occurs in both reading speed and retention capacity.*

Structure of Chapters

Some chapters have a section called "For Further Research." The section contains Internet links to material within the chapter thereby providing the student the ability to go into greater depth regarding a subject. The purpose for placing the links at the end of the chapter is so the student will not become distracted from the text and can choose the proper time to spend extra time researching.

You will also note there are links within the text of the chapters. These links are generally imperative to the subject being discussed.

Finally, throughout the text you will find our email address: info@KeyToStudy.com. We place this email address throughout the text as a reminder we want to hear from our students.

Our Goal

Our goal is to build a community of SuperLearners who exchange ideas and help each other grow. We delight in helping each of our students fulfill their potential and in turn become mentors to those who cross their path.

Again, our hope is you will persevere and open for yourself a new joy in learning. We wish the student good luck on their

journey to become a SuperLearner and our expectation for each of our students is to **READ WITH CONFIDENCE!**

Books, Courses And Resources

For discount on our books and courses, as well as other learning resources, please visit:

http://www.keytostudy.com/learning-resources-cheatsheet/

PART 1: WHO NEEDS THE KEYTOSTUDY METHOD

Chapter 1: My Story: How I Developed My Reading Strategy

Holes In My Education

When I was a kid, my parents wanted me to become a chess champion or a math professor and did not allow me to read the books I loved like science fiction and classics. This produced significant holes in my education, which started to hurt when I became 19 years old. A straight-A student in a prestigious university, I expected myself to know things. Yet, I failed simple trivia questions my less distinguished friends could answer from psychology and history. I needed to do something. I addressed the issue in my typical head-on fashion. After getting my first degree, I found too much time on my hands and enough money to buy any book I wanted. I bought the books and started reading – seriously reading.

Since the holes in my education included literature, history, and philosophy, I decided to fill them in. Eventually, as I gathered more information, my questions became more focused. Using the method of buying books and reading could not satisfy me anymore.

I started to work on my PhD and needed to read complex articles, which were just too boring to handle. I needed to look for information using this new search engine called Google (the year was 1999), and I needed to find basic principles which could explain and systematize the abundance of seemingly unconnected stuff I learned. I went through the articles I had already read, until one of them interested me sufficiently to dive in. Then, I would "dive in" and reread the entire article.

Meeting Anna

I met Anna the year I finished my PhD. She taught speedreading and comprehension. I told her I tried to do this myself, it did not work, and I did not believe in what she was doing. Needless to say, she had other assets that caught my attention, and it was not very long until we were married.

Anna explained with the new method she teaches, I would read much faster and remember EVERYTHING, no matter how boring or outdated and for as long as I needed to remember. After approximately 10 weeks of training with Anna, I graduated the course (1000 words per minute (wpm) 80% retention).

I still felt I read very slowly. I decided I should speed up a notch. To keep up with people around me, I needed to read a

massive amount of articles. I was focusing on articles and details I could reuse in my future work. Currently, I am reading at approximately 3000 wpm with approximately 80% retention using several proprietary methods.

What I Learned

Here is what I learned from years of training:

1. Each period of life comes with **unique challenges**. As an effective tool to address these challenges, a reading strategy needs to be adapted.

2. How we learn is a matter of **motivation**, much more than the methods we use.

3. It is okay to leave gaps, or even huge holes in our reading, as long as we **come back and fix the gaps** when we are ready.

The moral of the story is I was able to fill in the gaps in my education, married a wonderful woman and together we continue to help others become SuperLearners. With the above principles in mind, the KeyToStudy method has grown and changed through the years to meet the challenges of an ever-changing society.

Chapter 2: Getting Better At Getting Better

Kaizen

We would like to introduce the Japanese concept of kaizen for those who may not be familiar with the concept. Kaizen is the Japanese word for "change for better" and can be translated loosely as "good change". The idea is not searching for the biggest challenge and focusing all attention on it, but rather handing small challenges one by one, day by day, until the sum of small improvements generates a huge impact.

By improving standardized activities and processes, kaizen aims to eliminate waste. While kaizen usually delivers small improvements, the culture of continual aligned small improvements and standardized approach yields large results in terms of overall improvement in productivity.

Kaizen includes the idea of "getting better at getting better" as a key ingredient to productivity. For a SuperLearner, the *constant improvement is a continuous process.* For the KeyToStudy student, implementing the continual improvements and standardized approaches presented within this book will produce a cycle of questioning, learning and implementation.

Continuous Improvement Steps

This kind of continuous improvement can be broken down into six steps:

1. **Standardize**: Come up with a process for a specific activity that is repeatable and organized.

2. **Measure**: Examine whether the process is efficient using quantifiable data, e.g., time to complete, hours spent, etc.

3. **Compare**: Compare your measurements against your requirements. Does this process save time? Does it take too much time? Does it accomplish the desired result?

4. **Innovate**: Search for new, better ways to do the same work or achieve the same result. Look for smarter, more efficient routes to the same end-goal that boosts productivity.

5. **Repeat**: Go back to Step 1 and start again.

Our Training

Our training follows the same methodology of continuous improvement. We generate measurable, repeatable and reusable steps.

1. We start with **visualization**.

2. Then, we reuse visualization for creativity and **memory improvement**.

3. We **build speedreading** upon a stronger memory enhanced by improved visualization skills.

4. Our improved reading abilities are the basis for **better learning skills**.

In this book, we try to dedicate special attention to these steps.

There are two additional steps, which are extremely important for learning. We do not spend a lot of time on them in our course; however, these steps should be recognized and implemented:

5. Before you begin the learning process, **identify the need for change**.

6. **Implement the lessons** learned after you complete a learning process.

Need For Change

The need for change is required as a driving motivation for learning. Ask yourself:

- What skill or knowledge will make the **maximum change** in my well-being/understanding/contribution with **minimal effort investment**?

Once an answer emerges, *overcoming the minimal obstacles* is easy on your way to knowledge. On the other hand, an unfocused search for knowledge may cause you to lose interest, retreat and lose confidence.

Is It Worth The Effort?

The *implementation* part is harder. Before implementation is undertaken (and at each step of implementation process) we should ask ourselves, "Is it worth the effort?"

If the answer is "no go", maybe it is better to limit the losses. If the answer is "go," we have an obligation to ourselves to implement what we learned in practice, even if it is hard.

Many people do not follow this logic when deciding something is "too much work" at the crucial moment; however, this is probably the best opportunity to invest your energy and benefit from the results.

If you have not been progressing, be honest with yourself and understand the true reason for not progressing. In my experience, a good schedule induces positive preparation and reduces negative procrastination.

Asking the right question, finding a good answer and acting upon the new understanding generates positive change in our world. Let us get better at getting better!

For Further Research:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaizen

http://lifehacker.com/get-better-at-getting-better-the-kaizen-productivity-p-1672205148

Chapter 3: What Is The KeyToStudy Methodology

With the recent success of our "*Become a SuperLearner*" Udemy class and book with the same name, I often remind myself of our humble beginnings, and the key principles of our methodology. The KeyToStudy methodology has improved and expanded because of many years of research by Anna and myself.

KeyToStudy Methodology

The methodology builds upon the following ideas:

1. **Getting things done**. We ask our students:

   - to have **clear goals**,

   - to **use their skills** while learning to achieve meaningful results, and

   - to find time and motivation to **practice**.

We consider hands-on experience more important than theoretical understanding. Unlike many other methodologies, we build several skills gradually in mutually complementary form to produce the best results. Focusing on one particular skill may render the whole system ineffective.

2. **Visualization**. Our visual processing is much faster than our audio processing   much like a GPU (graphics processor unit) is typically stronger than a CPU (central processing unit). However, *to use information properly, encoding of the information must occur in a format our visual cortex can process*. We use visualization to achieve just the encoding process. There are several effective ways to visualize concepts: creatively, logically and otherwise. Occasionally, some of our students may not be able to visualize consciously, yet are still capable of great speed, which may occur subconsciously.

3. **Memorization**. A strong memory is a key to effective learning. We are <u>not</u> focusing on the memory athlete skillset, but on tasks students, teachers, business professionals, lawyers, programmers, engineers, doctors and linguists perform in their personal and professional life. Therefore, we adapt the memorization techniques to remember textbooks

and functional elements, not endless numbers or stacks of cards associated with popular memory championships.

4. **Speedreading**. Once the brain is trained to process large amounts of data, speedreading becomes a handy and necessary skill. Currently, speedreading is probably the best way to learn a large quantity of data on almost any subject. When we started to develop the methodology in the early 2000s, books were still the main modality of reading. Today, we consume most of our information in digital format; therefore, we have adapted our methodology accordingly.

5. **Analysis**. It is unreasonable to remember more information than can be used. It is counter-productive if fictions of our imagination mix with the information we learn. An advanced skillset always includes:
- adaptation to the material,
- use of prior knowledge,
- prioritization of what we read, and
- developing the best strategy for our personal style and personal need.

6. **Community**. One of our main priorities is building and maintaining a strong community of SuperLearners. People are different individuals, and we can help each other become better. By working with Jonathan Levi, Suraj Sharma and many others, we are building a strong and flexible community capable of learning, helping and developing each other to become SuperLearners.

Your success is our success. Please do not hesitate to contact us:

info@KeyToStudy.com