Become expert on any topic in a few hours

With the right techniques, dedication, and a dash of curiosity, you can learn to understand and navigate any topic proficiently. True expertise takes time and experience, but what we're aiming for here is functional knowledge, the kind that allows you to confidently navigate new topics, contribute intelligently to conversations, and quickly adapt to the ever-changing demands of the tech industry.

Let's get into the nitty-gritty of rapid learning.

First and foremost, we need to understand that this process isn't about memorizing facts and figures. It's about understanding concepts, asking the right questions, and knowing where to find reliable information.

One of key techniques I am using is simply '**Visualization**' as researching any topic or doing any work. I always try to visualize how it could be implemented into a production app and what are my key missing points to implement it.

I often use a technique I call '**The Big Picture Scan**'. This involves reading overviews, summaries, and introductions to the topic at hand. Resources like Wikipedia, introductory articles, or even YouTube videos can be fantastic for this. The goal here is not to understand everything but to get a sense of what the topic is all about. Say you've been tasked with creating an e-commerce site and you need to learn about payment gateways. As I am trying to get a sense of a topic about payment gateways and how they fit into ecommerce stores I try to visualize parts of the transaction flow which would require a custom solution, do they have prebuilt solution etc not necessarily carrying about how to directly implement it.

Next, we move on to '**Focused Learning**'. Here's where we start diving deeper. Based on what we learned during the Big Picture Scan, we can now identify key subtopics, concepts, or techniques that are important. We focus on these areas and spend more time understanding them. Understand more about your key missing points to implement it into real world application.

One method I often employ during Focused Learning is the '**Feynman Technique**'. Named after the renowned physicist Richard Feynman, this technique involves explaining a concept in your own words, as if you were teaching it to someone else. This helps solidify understanding and reveals any gaps in your knowledge. I often walk around and talk to myself explaining the topic as if someone was listening and trying to understand. Sounds crazy? Don't worry we are here to make money.

Another important tool in my arsenal is '**Just-in-time Learning**'. This is about learning on the go, using resources like StackOverflow and GitHub. With this method, you learn by doing, finding solutions to problems as they arise. Everyone reading this should be familiar with this.

But remember, becoming an expert is not just about gaining knowledge, it's also about knowing how to apply it. Therefore, don't forget to practice. Apply what you've learned in real-world scenarios or projects. This will not only help solidify your understanding but also give you confidence in your abilities.

Let me expand further and show you what I would do if I had to create an e-commerce site for the first time.

1. **The Big Picture Scan**. Explore some introductory material to understand what payment gateways are, why they are important, and how they fit into the bigger picture of e-commerce. You might read a few articles, watch a video or two, or even listen to a podcast episode about payment gateways. As I am doing this, I try to visualize the overall flow of transactions in an e-commerce system and where the payment gateway fits in. What are my key missing gaps to implement this into a real world production app.
2. **Focused Learning**. In this case, my key areas include understanding how to integrate a payment gateway into a website, learning about different providers like Stripe or PayPal, and understanding how they handle transactions securely. For each of these areas, I find more detailed resources and spend more time studying them. As I am learning, I visualize how each piece of the puzzle fits into the e-commerce site I am creating. For example, I would check GitHub for already prebuilt solutions on how stripe was implemented, does Stripe provide us with already done examples? Whatever my key missing point is to implement it into real world application and make it seamless for users to experience is what I am researching, this will vary upon your experience and knowledge.
3. **Feynman Technique**. Now, I try to explain this process in my own words as if I were teaching it to someone else. To help visualize, I might draw a diagram, put it on the paper, write it inside google docs whatever works is what I do I remain flexible to put idea into working steps for real world production app because once you move away from paper / theoretical to real world production app you now obtain knowledge upon how to make it work for users.

All throughout this process, keep the end goal in mind: creating a secure, functional e-commerce site. By combining these techniques and using visualization, you're not just passively absorbing information - you're actively thinking about how to apply what you're learning to solve a real-world problem.