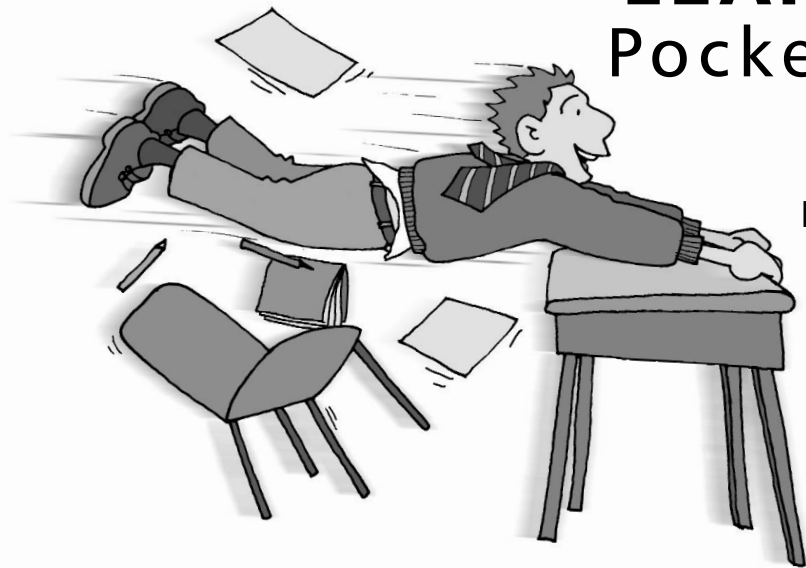


# ACCELERATED LEARNING Pocketbook

*2nd edition*

**By Brin Best**

Cartoons:  
Phil Hailstone



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# Before the lessons begins



The beginnings of lessons are vital because they help set the tone for the rest of the lesson:

- **Aim to arrive before the students** to give yourself preparation time
- **Greet each student** politely and in a friendly way
- **Insist students enter quietly** and settle at their desks in an orderly fashion
- Consider using **music** to set the tone for the lesson
- Make sure any **equipment** and **handouts** are ready to give out, and on the students' desk if appropriate
- **Engage students' interest** with a question or puzzle on the board



# Structuring a lesson



It is important that you provide an effective structure for all your lessons that promotes your students' learning. The following provides a 'brain-friendly' 4-part structure for your lessons.

## Part 1: put the learning in context (about 5% of lesson time)

- Explore what the students learnt in the previous lesson
- Relate the learning to the overall syllabus
- Share with your students the main themes of the lesson
- Explain what is coming in the next lesson
- Mind-maps can be a very useful visual tool for this part of the lesson, showing students how an individual lesson fits into the wider course they are studying



# Structuring a lesson



**Part 2: starter** (about 10% of lesson time)

- Begin with a short activity that engages students' interest, eg a prop, story, exciting stimulus material. This helps your students to activate their learning and enter the alpha state (see page 24)
- Try to help students put what they already know about the topic in context
- Prepare the students for the main teaching and learning that will follow



# Structuring a lesson



## Part 3: main teaching and learning (about 75% of lesson time)

- Students should be carrying out activities for as much of this time as possible
- You should act as a facilitator for their learning – try not to talk for too long
- Students should be engaged in multi-sensory learning that respects their learning preferences and intelligence profiles
- All students should be set work which is of an appropriate level of challenge
- Allow choice over how students carry out tasks
- Learning should be broken down into achievable chunks
- Find plenty of opportunities to develop thinking skills
- Give students opportunities to demonstrate what they have learnt, for example by explaining it to you or to one of their peers



# Structuring a lesson



## Part 4: plenary (about 10% of lesson time)

- Provides an opportunity for learning to be reviewed
- Students should be given the chance to reflect on what they think the main learning points of the lesson have been
- You should include careful use of teacher questioning (see next page)



# Questioning



Effective questioning techniques are a really important part of your lesson. Questioning helps you determine how much your students have understood, as well as allowing you to stretch students' thinking.

- Use a **wide range** of questioning techniques
- Pitch the **language** and **content level** of questions appropriately
- Ask **open** as well as closed questions to explore deeper understanding
- **Prompt** and **give clues** where necessary
- Allow **thinking time** (at least five seconds for simple questions and ten seconds or more for more complex ones)
- **Invite answers** from particular individuals as well as asking the whole class
- **Wait before commenting** on a student's answers, thereby allowing him/her to revise or expand their response, and encouraging others to contribute too
- **Do not favour** students with higher ability or according to where they are seated (you will tend to neglect those closest to you and those right at the back of the room)
- Encourage students to **devise their own questions**



# Varying your teaching strategies



The most successful teachers use an extensive **repertoire** of different teaching techniques to stimulate interest among their students. Providing variety will help increase your students' motivation. Use the checklist below to help you vary your teaching style.

Reflect back over the last half-term and indicate with a tick whether your students have:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Used a newspaper                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Done some individual or group research            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Played a game                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Done some extended reading                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Answered questions from a book      | <input type="checkbox"/> Done a brainstorming session                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Had a discussion                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Drawn a graph or used statistics                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Made a model                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Drawn a diagram or cartoon                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Done a quiz or test                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Used music in their work                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Written an essay                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Been outside the classroom for a task or activity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Written a newspaper article         | <input type="checkbox"/> Listened to an outside speaker                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Worked in a pair or a group         | <input type="checkbox"/> Sat in different places from usual                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Had a debate                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Worked in the school library                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Done a role play                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Worked on a poster                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Made up a play or a TV/radio script | <input type="checkbox"/> Worked with somebody they don't know very well    |

## About the author



**Brin Best BSc, PGCE, FRGS, FMA** is a consultant specialising in school improvement and classroom innovation. He has fulfilled a wide variety of roles within education, including classroom teacher, college lecturer, head of department, school development officer and LA advisory teacher. He writes and speaks widely on education issues and has a special interest in teaching and learning. He is carrying out a part-time PhD into accelerated learning at Leeds University. Whilst a teacher his department and students received numerous national awards for their work, and in 2000 he received a Millennium Fellowship for his pioneering work on environmental education.

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