

## **Whole Body Learning**

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According to speed-reading experts, we take in 2000 times more information than our conscious minds are aware. We do this through a multiple use of our senses - both by themselves and when used together. The better we can use our body in learning, the better we can learn. This is what we do when we craft learning experiences at Cheetah Learning – we help each student to leverage their whole body to learn faster and more effectively.

**Eyes** – According to the Visual Teaching Alliance, approximately 65% of the population are visual learners. This means that they assimilate information best when ideas, concepts, and data are conveyed using visual techniques rather than through audio or text.

Think about how you assimilate information. Do you have an easier time remembering pictures and charts rather than just text? Do you see information in your mind when you close your eyes? Do you make a “movie” in your mind as you read to better associate with the information you are processing? These are things that help visual learners to learn.

Your eyes also help you make spatial sense of the world. Working on your peripheral vision can help you pick up more information in your environment – this is especially helpful when you are learning new skills. Students in engineering classes improve their spatial cognition abilities by taking basic engineering drawing classes their freshman year, which then helps them in subsequent courses as they have used their eyes to improve their spatial cognition. Visual aids can improve learning by 400% - so the next time you are learning a new concept – use your eyes!

**Ears** – Auditory learners are those who learn best when they can hear the information. But hearing information is not the only way you can benefit by using your ears. The right kind of music, such as Baroque classical music, can help you relax and can boost your mental performance as you learn.

A study called the “Mozart effect” found that listening to Mozart’s music could improve performance as it enhanced the ability to think of abstract solutions to logical problems. At Cheetah Learning, we also do some fairly fascinating things with binaural beats. When people listen to binaural beats through headphones and one ear hears a different beat than the other ear, the middle of the brain senses the difference between the two beats and entrains the brain waves to the frequency difference. This is very helpful for putting you into a more relaxed brain state that is better for learning new information. Now, that sounds pretty amazing!

**Nose** - Your sense of smell is your strongest sense of instant recall and state conditioning. When you need to remember vast amounts of information such as when you take exams, it's helpful to activate this sense. In Cheetah Learning's Accelerated Exam Prep program, our students eat sugar-free mints throughout their course and then take them with them into the exam. This way, they are reproducing their state of relaxed focus that they learned how to achieve in class and they are thus stimulating instant recall of the key concepts.

We also use our noses for breathing. How you breathe significantly impacts your brain state and how you can learn. In Cheetah's courses, we teach our students how to best breathe to put their brains in a state of peak performance.

**Mouth** - Chewing mint-flavored gum while studying can have an even stronger impact on the state of conditioning and instant recall; however, many exam centers do not allow gum chewing.

**Vocal Chords** - Some people learn best by hearing themselves talk about what it is they are learning. This is a combination of your speaking ability and your abilities to hear. So making your own binaural beat tapes of what you need to learn in your own voice can help significantly when you like to learn this way.

**Stomach** - Everyone has experienced a "gut feeling" before - it happens when you're nervous, scared, or excited and your gut is conveying information that can be useful to the rest of your body, so long as you listen.

Scientists often refer to the gut as the "Second Brain" due to the extensive network of neurons that line our gut. According to a Scientific American article, "*Think Twice: how the Gut's "Second Brain" Influences Mood and Well Being*", reveals that the neurotransmitters in the gut do much more than handle our digestion; they actually play a larger role in our mental state. Given that 90% of the fibers in the gut carry information from the gut to the brain, and not the other way around, it's not surprising to see how the gut can affect your mental and emotional state of being.

So what does this mean for you? To be in a state of mind where you are conducive for learning, you can't just focus on the brain in your head, but also your "second brain." By eating lots of vegetables, lean proteins, and complex carbohydrates, you are making it easy for your gut to do its job, and therefore send positive messages to your brain.

**Fingers** - One of the most important mottos at The Center for Accelerated Learning is "Learning is Creation, not Consumption." This means that a learner does not simply absorb knowledge, but actually creates knowledge by building synapses in the brain and integrates the new knowledge or skill into their existing structure of self. The best way to do this is by using your fingers.

By writing down what you are learning in way that makes sense to you – through drawings or mind maps or notes – you are creating linkages in your brain in ways you can more quickly retrieve it. With your hand, draw a mind map summary of each chapter you read next time you read a book – you will be amazed at how much more knowledge you created in this effort than if you had simply read the book. The more you draw the mind maps, the better you will get at this skill.

**Arms & Legs** – Do you think the best way to learn tennis is by watching and analyzing the Williams sisters for hours on end – or going out and playing? While learning a skill like tennis can be improved by pretending you are playing and seeing yourself playing like Williams sisters, kinesthetic learning happens when the body is moving and you are learning a task or skill by actually doing it.

If you are this type of learner, you might use big hand gestures when telling stories – because you learn and convey messages by moving and expressing. Moving also helps to dissipate nervous energy that makes it much harder to concentrate and focus. This is the reason why in every 90 minutes of Cheetah’s courses, our students do an eight-minute series of yoga stretches designed to help burn off any excess stress and maintain a state of relaxed focus.

Focusing on every part of your body is the way to improve how you learn and this gets even more important as you age. Recent studies by the Center for Brain Health through the University of Dallas show that the more you can engage all elements of your body, the better you can maintain and even improve your abilities to learn at any age. So remember – it’s not “all in your head” – it’s in your whole body.

### **About the Author:**



Michelle LaBrosse, PMP, is an entrepreneurial powerhouse with a penchant for making success easy, fun, and fast. She is the founder of [Cheetah Learning](#), the [author](#) of the [Cheetah Success Series](#), and a prolific [blogger](#) whose mission is to bring Project Management to the masses.

Cheetah Learning is a virtual company with 100 employees, contractors, and licensees worldwide. To date, more than 50,000 people have become “Cheetahs”

using Cheetah Learning's innovative Project Management and accelerated learning techniques.

Recently honored by the Project Management Institute (PMI®), Cheetah Learning was named Professional Development Provider of the Year at the 2008 PMI® Global Congress. A dynamic keynote speaker and industry thought leader, Michelle was previously recognized by PMI as one of the 25 Most Influential Women in Project Management in the world.

Michelle's articles have appeared in more than 100 publications and websites around the world. Her monthly column, the [Know How Network](#), is carried by over 400 publications.

She is a graduate of the Harvard Business School's Owner/President Management (OPM) program and holds engineering degrees from Syracuse University and the University of Dayton.