ULTRALEARNING

Master Hard Skills, Outsmart the Competition, and Accelerate Your Career

SCOTT H. YOUNG

SCOTT YOUNG is a writer and business owner. In 2012, he ran his own self-directed education project where in twelve months and for less than $2,000, he was able to learn how to code sufficiently well that he could pass the same final exams that MIT computer science graduates are required to pass at the end of their four-year degree programs. To achieve this, Scott Young used open-source computer science lectures available online along with his own self-organized learning activities and exercises. His TEDx talk about his learning approach has been viewed more than half a million times. To further refine his learning methodology, Scott Young then went on to learn four languages in twelve months. Scott Young is a graduate of the University of Manitoba and Montpellier Business School.

The website for this book is at: www.scotthyoung.com.

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MAIN IDEA

Is it really possible to get an MIT-level education without attending MIT? Or to learn a new language to the point of becoming fluent and conversant in just three months? Or to develop your own video game from scratch and make it a commercial success without being a professional game developer working for a big studio?

The answer to these and similar questions is an unqualified "Yes". In fact, there is an entire culture of people who have achieved these and other compelling goals on the basis of their self-education projects. These are the ultralearners.

"Ultralearning" is a strategy for acquiring skills and knowledge in a self-directed and intense manner. You make a decision about what you want to learn and then undertake concentrated learning activities which push you to your limits and compress your learning into the shortest feasible time.

ULTRA LEARNING

Ultralearning can be used to accelerate the career you already have, to transition to the career you always wanted to have, or to rescue your career by adding new hard skills that are more valuable. Ultralearning is the very best way to deal with a changing world.

There are nine principles that are involved in running successful ultralearning projects. Master them and you can learn anything you set your mind to. This is the ultimate competitive advantage of the future, because no matter what happens, you'll be able to learn and adapt.

The world belongs to the ultralearners. Join their ranks by mastering the art of learning hard things quickly. It will serve you well.

NINE PRINCIPLES OF ULTRA LEARNING

1	METALEARNING	DRAW A MAP FIRST
2	FOCUS	SHARPEN YOUR KNIFE
3	DIRECTNESS	GO STRAIGHT AHEAD
4	DRILL	ATTACK YOUR WEAKEST POINT
5	RETRIEVAL	TEST TO LEARN
6	FEEDBACK	DON'T DODGE THE PUNCHES
7	RETENTION	DON'T FILL A LEAKY BUCKET
8	INTUITION	DIG DEEP FIRST, THEN BUILD UP
9	EXPERIMENT	EXPLORE OUTSIDE YOUR COMFORT ZONE

Start any ultralearning project by learning what is the most effective way to learn the subject or acquire the skill you're after. Figure out how to learn efficiently.

Carve out chunks of time where you can concentrate and focus on what you're trying to learn consistently well.

Learn by doing the things you're trying to become good at. Don't trade hands-on experience for other more convenient alternatives.

Break complex skills into their component parts and then be ruthless about improving your weakest points. Master the component parts and then reassemble them.

Use the testing process to learn more as you go along. Always test yourself before you feel confident, and push yourself to recall information, not just review it.

Put aside your ego and look for the harshest feedback you can find. Extract the signal from the noise, and pay attention to what that feedback highlights you need to learn.

Be aware and understand what you're consistently forgetting, and do something about it. Learn to remember things not just for now but forever.

Play and explore to develop your intuition, and work to understand what you learn. Don't resort to memorization tricks but get to know your subject deeply.

Don't lose sight of the fact you can't become a true master of your subject by following the paths trodden by others. Explore possibilities others have not imagined.

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