

Book (and Product) Review: Introduction to ASIT

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Introduction to ASIT by Dr. Roni Horowitz. 2003. 95 pages. Published as an e-book packaged with the on-line course “Introduction to ASIT” (See course review in the July 2001 issue of The TRIZ Journal) US\$29 for both course and book.

<http://hop.clickbank.net/?ellendomb/star2think>

ASIT is a relative of TRIZ that many people use to get a very quick start at using TRIZ concepts, and other people use as their entire system for creative problem solving. We have had several ASIT articles in the TRIZ Journal (1,2) so this review will skip the explanations of ASIT/TRIZ similarities and differences.

This book is a product enhancement for the on-line ASIT Premier class. It was developed because of happy customers. Customers (including the reviewer!) who liked the course frequently commented that they needed a reference to use after taking the course. The course is extremely pictorial. The book is mostly text, with a few line drawings. They complement each other, and will appeal to people with different learning styles. The book uses some of the same examples as the course, but does not assume that the reader has taken the course first—each example is explained the first time it is used.

The book introduces the concept of “Functional fixedness” that is not covered in the course, that seems to be very useful for an understanding of TRIZ or ASIT. Briefly, functional fixedness is a form of psychological inertia, or paradigm paralysis, to use two familiar phrases, supported by considerable research. It describes how people identify a particular object with one function of that object, and don’t see other possible uses for the object. TRIZ teachers and facilitators will find the simple exercises that demonstrate functional fixedness to be easy to use, and quite helpful in liberating groups that are stuck on a particular way of using one of the resources of the problem.

Some readers will find the tone of the book, which is very conversational and informal, to be irritating, and others will find it charming. The informality does not affect the usefulness of the content. For example, after using a folk story to present a case study, the following summary and comments are presented:

- 1. Take advantage of the **time frame** over and beyond the one in which the problem lies.*
- 2. Try **not** to bring in any **new objects**.*
- 3. Try to stay **close** to the **rules of the game**.*
- 4. Think the **opposite**: if strength is required, think about a weak object. If heat is required, think about cold, etc.*

This “method” we’ve just developed is very primitive... well, what can you expect from a single case study? But don’t make any mistake – this is exactly how ASIT was developed!

None of these fit in with your concept of creativity? Believe me, this is only the beginning! Wait for more counter-intuitive suggestions later on in the course!

Many TRIZ practioners have the mistaken idea that ASIT is a partial version of TRIZ. Dr. Horowitz makes it clear that ASIT is a system that is complete in itself, but also makes ASIT's roots in TRIZ visible. Readers with no TRIZ experience can use ASIT very quickly. Readers who are familiar with TRIZ will find new insights in the way that ASIT uses familiar techniques, such as asymmetry or mono-bi-poly.

As multimedia learning evolves, we will need new terminology. Since this book is sold as part of the interactive on-line course, this essay should probably not be called a book review. The book is useful to people who have not taken the course, and to those who have. The price is extremely reasonable (considering the prices of other TRIZ books, and TRIZ courses, including my own!) Dr. Horowitz has also made a very generous offer of low fee, no royalty arrangements to anyone who wants to translate ***Introduction to ASIT*** and offer it to non-English speaking audiences (including a Spanish version—see the announcement of Proyecto TRIZ in the March 2003 TRIZ Journal) To use the tone of ***Introduction to ASIT***, is this done to promote training, consulting, and sales the ASIT course? Of course! But who cares? It is a very useful book, and many people will learn structured creativity who might not otherwise encounter either TRIZ or ASIT.

References:

1. Roni Horowitz. The TRIZ Journal, August, September, and November, 2001.
2. Toru Nakagawa. "Reorganizing TRIZ Solution Generation Methods into Simple Five in USIT" TRIZ Journal, January 2003