

Fostering a Brain-Based Learning Approach

Evidence suggests that stress is a significant factor in creativity, memory, behavior and learning. Teachers who purposely manage stress factors in class are likely to experience a positive classroom environment and increased student engagement. Brain-based learning takes neuroscience research into consideration in the design of the classroom, learning spaces, and the student's senses (sight, sound, smell).

Whole Language Teaching: Focus more on meaning than memorization:

- Teach vocabulary
- Check for understanding
- Encourage question asking
- Experience knowledge (life relevant approach, integrated curriculum)

Movement: Take "brain breaks" frequently

- Midline crossing
- Stimulates sensory nervous system
- Remember 4-8 minute window of attention

Motivation: Fosters interest and attention

- Choices
- Use technology to tie to content
- Teach kinesthetically
- Surprise, novelty, and fun!
- Reinforcement and feedback

Nutrition: Feed the Brain

- Break the cycle of "brain buster" foods
- Eat close to the earth
- Educate and model better selections

Water: The brain is made of 80% water and needs water to function

- Dehydration has been linked to inattentiveness and poor performance
- Model water as a selection
- 6-8 glasses per day

Exercise: May actually transform performance

- Teaches the elements of learning
- Improves memory
- Reduces stress and anxiety

Emotional Regulation: Defined by impulsivity, inattentiveness, hyperactivity, over-reactivity

- The second of the six core strengths (B. Perry)

- Repetitive exposure to “controlled challenges”
- Teach to read body signals
- Critical life skill

Stress Management: Can be enhanced by the environment

- Model and stress organization (clutter causes chaos)
- Create positive rituals
- Use music as a primer or carrier