

# Learning Styles

Junior Docent Training

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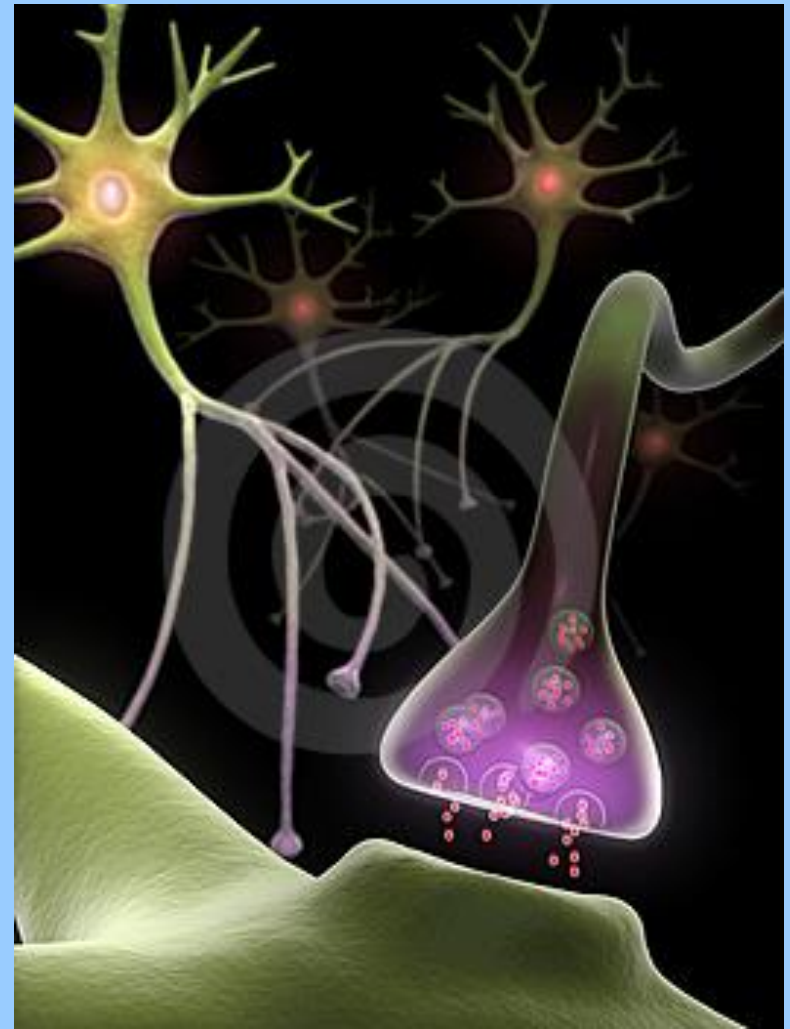
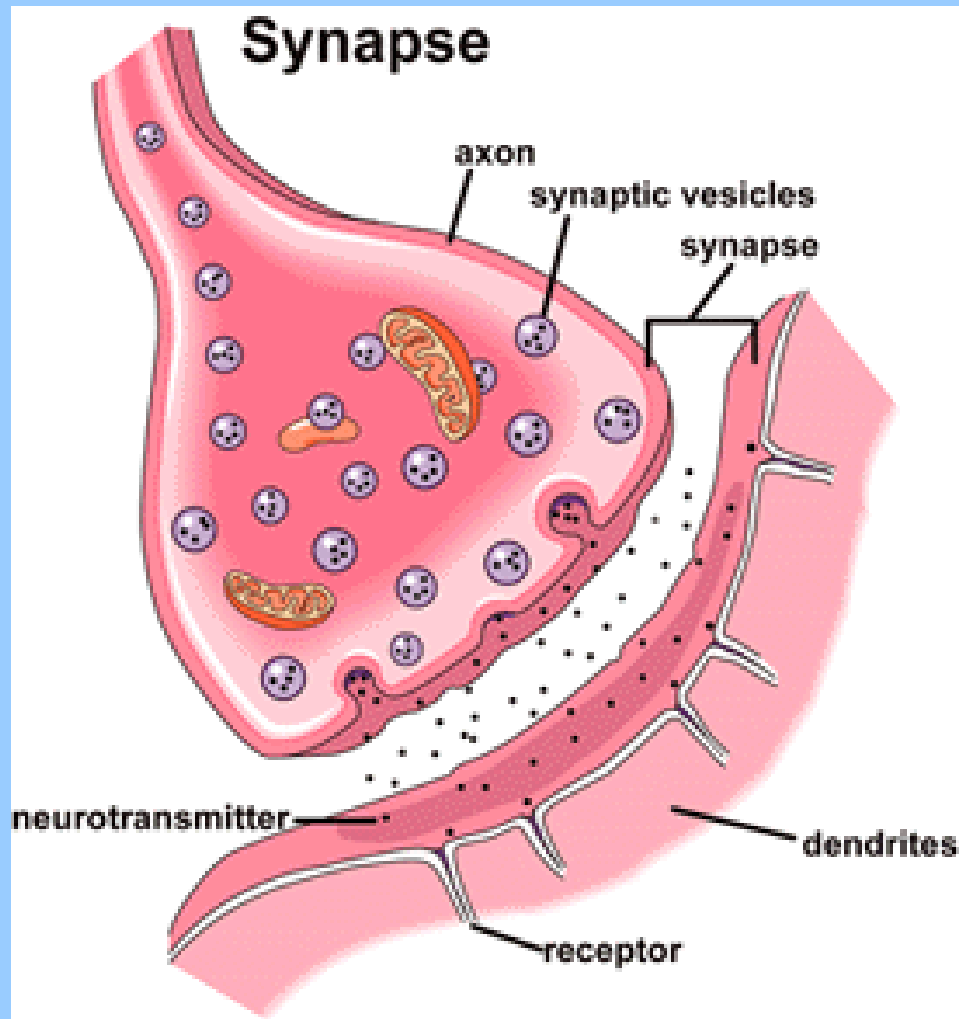
# Learning in the Information Age

- We are a “learning society”: we value learning as part of our leisure time experiences.
- How will we ever keep up in the knowledge explosion that is the Information Age?
- Teaching the *process* of learning has become more important than teaching the *content*.
- The role of *teacher* is changing to *facilitator*.



# Brain Research

- Brains work by making connections:  
“Neurons that fire together, wire together.”



# Brain Research

- We make associations to what is relevant in our life.



# Brain Research

- We try to make sense of what we see/hear/feel/taste in order for it to have meaning
- Either we hook into what's already there, or we create a new experience that will be remembered.



# Mind/Brain Principles

- Thoughts, emotions, imagination, predispositions, and physiology all operate concurrently and interactively.



# Mind/Brain Principles: *Engagement*

- Learning is profoundly influenced by the nature of our social relationships.





# Mind/Brain Principles

- The brain resists “meaninglessness”: it maps, categorizes, and organizes.
- Expectations, personal biases, self esteem, prejudices, and emotions all affect brain responses.



# Mind/Brain Principles

- The brain absorbs direct as well as peripheral information (the museum environment).





# Mind/Brain Principles

- The brain perceives and responds to non-verbal communication.
- Learning is both conscious and unconscious: understanding can occur hours, weeks, or months later.
- It is important to have opportunities to learn new languages and about the arts early in life.

# Mind/Brain Principles

- Learning is enhanced by challenge and inhibited by threat:
  - under threat we revert to primitive attitudes (fatigue, helplessness)
  - “relaxed alertness” enhances learning: feeling ready for assistance to go to next level (zone of proximal development)
  - changes that lead to reorganization of oneself are stressful

# “Chunking”

- Limited not by number of items but by number of meaningful groupings, or “chunks.”



# “Chunking”

- Experts chunk better than novices: know the content, or know the cues/groupings.



# “Chunking”

- Examples:
  - numbers
  - rhythm
  - letters



NOP ARKI NGHE  
RETOD AYPLE, ASE

**NO PARKING HERE  
TODAY, PLEASE**

TH BRN CN RD THS  
WTHT TH VWLS

# Modality Preferences

- Ways we prefer to learn:
  - visual
  - auditory/verbal
  - kinesthetic/tactile
  - olfactory

*Which one(s) are you?*





# Field Sensitivity

- How learners react to what they see in the “field”: the object in the museum
- Find details/make connections
- Provide guidance: look, and look again – inquiry and Visual Thinking Strategies

# Cognitive Tempo

- How fast do learners respond with some level of comprehension?
  - impulsives
  - reflectives





# Locus of Control

- Where does a learner's motivation to respond come from?
  - internal
  - external
- Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator: introverts (25%) and extroverts (75%)

# The Challenge/Bottom Line:

How do we create the kind of learning experience—for a wide range of people—that makes them eager to return for more (with or without a docent)?

“... inspire visitors to discover personal meanings in art and confidently explore museums on their own.”

- *Empowerment*
- *Ownership*