



Keys to the Kingdom

Hints about becoming
an excellent teacher
in academe

Conversations about teaching and learning
with Leslie Owen Wilson, Ed.D. (© all rights
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"Sharing time is a happy time" CPS Faculty
development seminars



Questions, Questions, & More Questions

Good teaching is tied to asking and answering a series of BIG questions that lead to

- Developing a sense of vision
- Creating well-planned, meaningful instruction
- Exploring how humans learn

Developing a sense of vision





Internalize

- ❖ Why are they here?
- ❖ Whose classroom is it?
- ❖ What is your vision of the learner as they leave your realm of influence?
- ❖ How will they have changed or grown, and in what ways?
- ❖ What will they be able to do and at what level of mastery?
- ❖ How do we really know what they know and what they have mastered?
- ❖ How is learning and knowledge best organized and delivered?



Why are they here?

What is education really for?

- ▣ Foster skills for productive employment
- ▣ Teach social responsibility
- ▣ Enhance personal development & self-discovery
- ▣ Build character and moral fiber
- ▣ Encourage enlightenment & critical thinking
- ▣ Explore timeless ideas
- ▣ Learn about the world and other cultures
- ▣ Promote wellness & wise living skills

Ask them!

Engage them in talking about their goals & visions.

Philosophy

Knowledge
& Teaching
beliefs

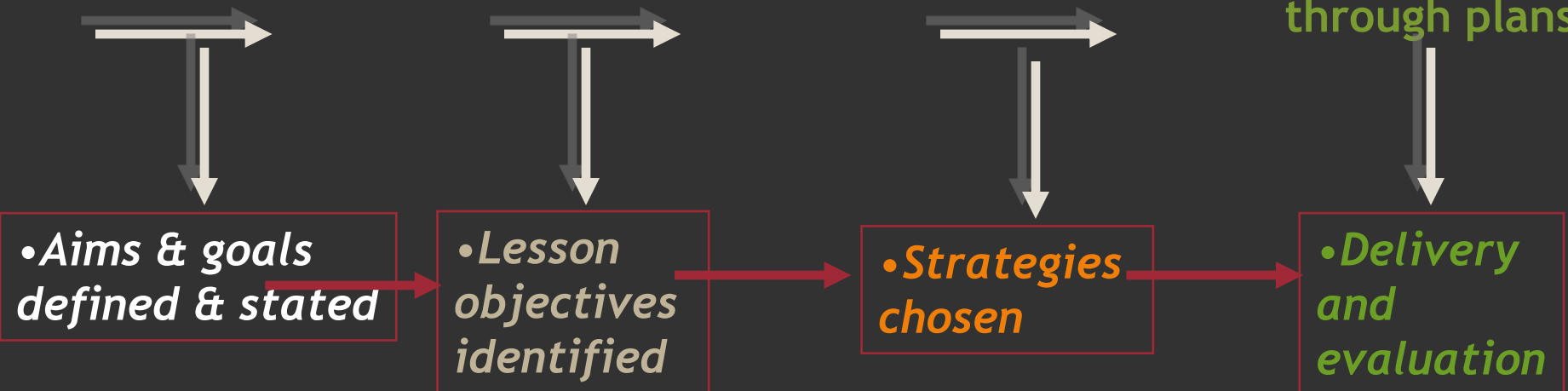
Learning theory

Must be
compatible w/
beliefs about how
children learn
and grow.

Instructional plans

Compatible w/
philosophy and
chosen theories.

• Lesson plans
Incorporate
defined beliefs
and deliver
messages to
students
through plans



Before any kind of organized educational planning occurs we need to understand our personal belief system and formulate a philosophy of education. Those beliefs do and will propel our instructional choices.

Beliefs propel our instructional choices

Beliefs have tone, substance, and direction

- **Progressive**
To educate people to live reasonably and resolve problems cooperatively within a democratic society.
- **Social Change or Reconstructivism**
To use education to transform society.
- **Humanistic**
To support and facilitate the personal growth and development of each individual student.
- **Essentialism**
To transmit intellectual and moral standards.
- **Existentialism**
To stress the importance of the individual and emotional commitment to living authentically.
- **Perennialism**
To acquire knowledge about the great ideas of Western culture.



Needs a Clear Orientation

- ❖ My Classroom - learning as something done to the learner - learners are presumed as neutral or passive
- ❖ Our Classroom - learning is something done with the learner - learners are presumed as active
- ❖ Their classroom - learning is something done for the learner - learners are presumed as active



Knowledge of what drives human needs

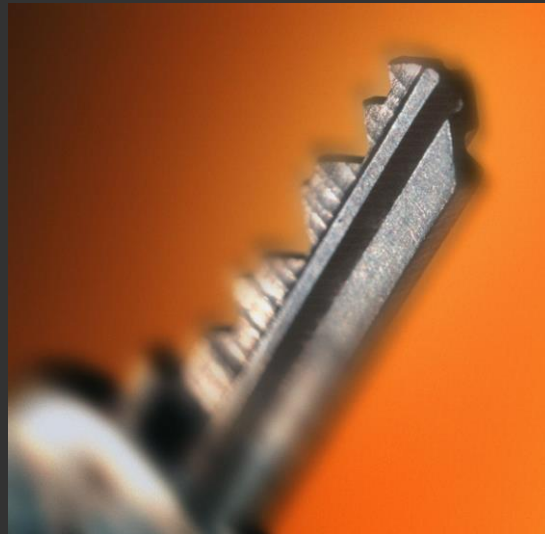
What motivates humans to want learn and explore?

- Identity - Self-knowledge - Intrapersonal Skills
 - Who am I and where am I going?

- Power (Control, Direction, Choices) - Knowledge of a sense of place, purpose, and intention.
 - What kind of power do I have now?
 - What can I control in the future?
 - How do I get power and control and maintain it?

- Connectedness - Knowledge of others and things, the examination of relationships, and interpersonal skills.
 - How am I connected to others, to other beings, to the earth, to the cosmos?

Creating well-planned, meaningful instruction





Backward Design a 5 Step Process

- ❖ Create a vision of your students at the end of contact
- ❖ Determine what is worthy of teaching and learning
- ❖ Pinpoint evidence of understanding
- ❖ Select strategies, experiences, and methods of delivery
- ❖ Reflect, evaluate, refine and revise assumptions, content, and instructional methods

Imagine your students as they leave your realm of influence.

Key Questions and Imagined changes:

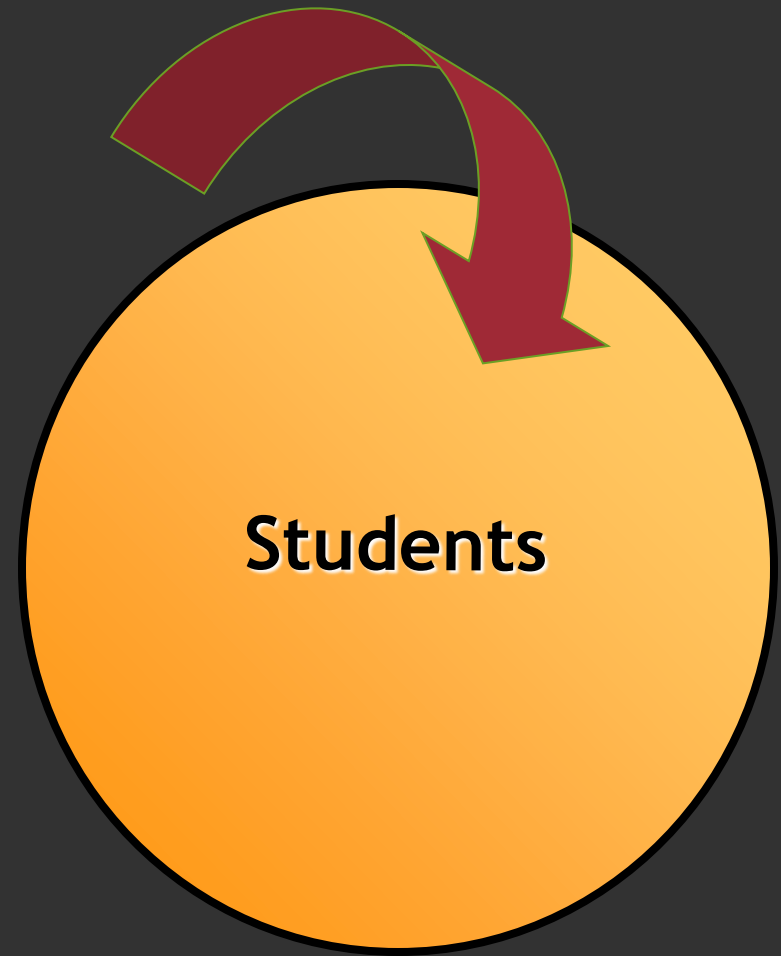
- What will they know and understand?
- What will they be able to do, and at what level of mastery?
- How will their thinking, feelings, or physical movement have changed?

What is your vision of your students at the end of contact?

Step 1

Filters for your interactions and assumptions:

- What is your image of the learners (active/passive)?
- What expectations do you have of entering learners?
- What awareness do you have of the culture and history of your learners?
- How do students learn best?



Define your content and processes - What is worthy of teaching? Filters help define your discipline.



- What is worth knowing?
Enduring?
At the heart of the discipline/position?
Needing uncoverage?
Potentially engaging?
- What knowledge is enabling?
- What activities are appropriate to your disciplinary area?
- What will need to be taught or coached?
- What materials and resources are best?
- Is the overall design organized, coherent and effective?

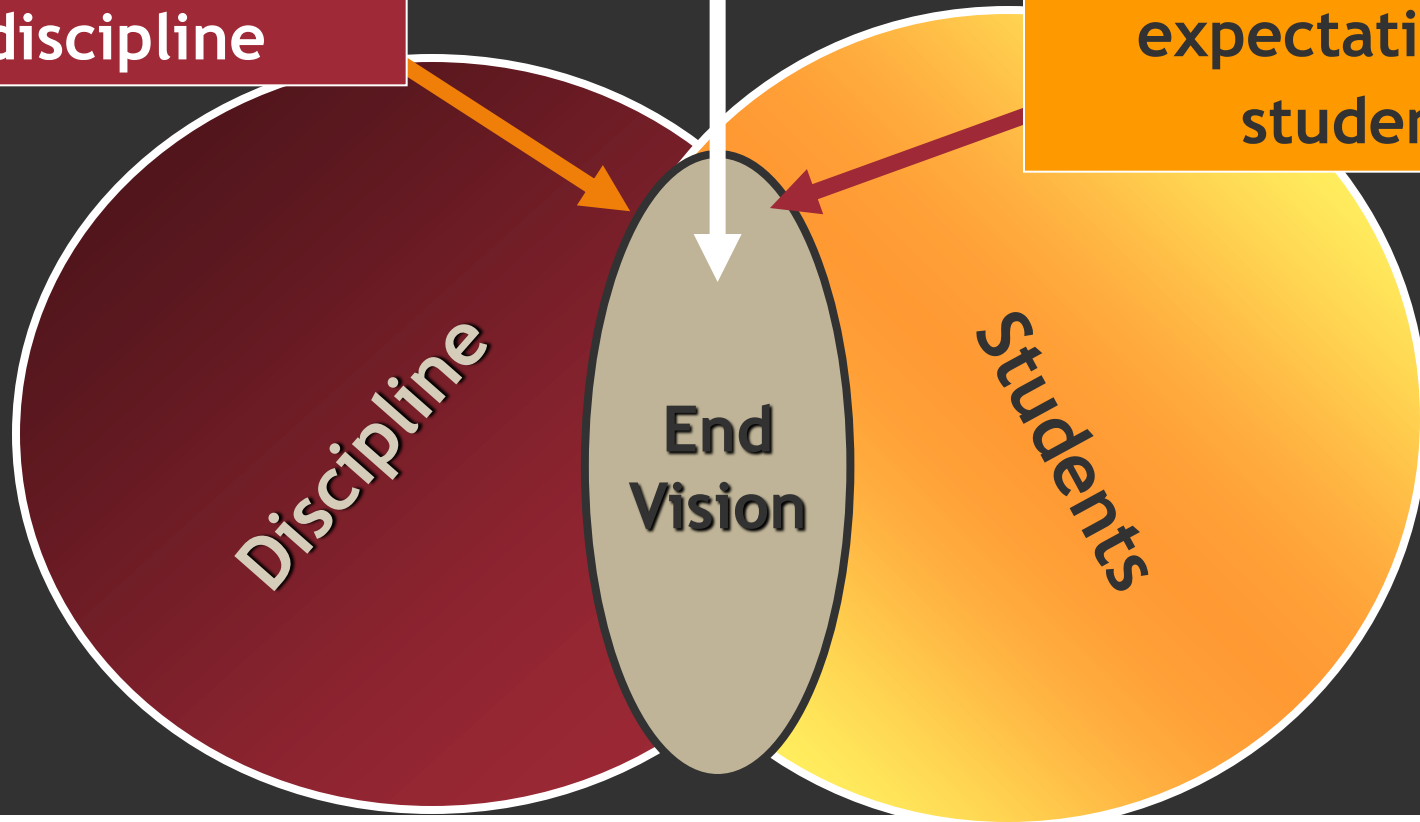
Step 2

Questions on content or processes

Your vision of the student at the end of their contact/training.

Melds filters defined by your discipline

With filters from your interactions, assumptions, and expectations of students



The end vision

This is the point where good instruction starts

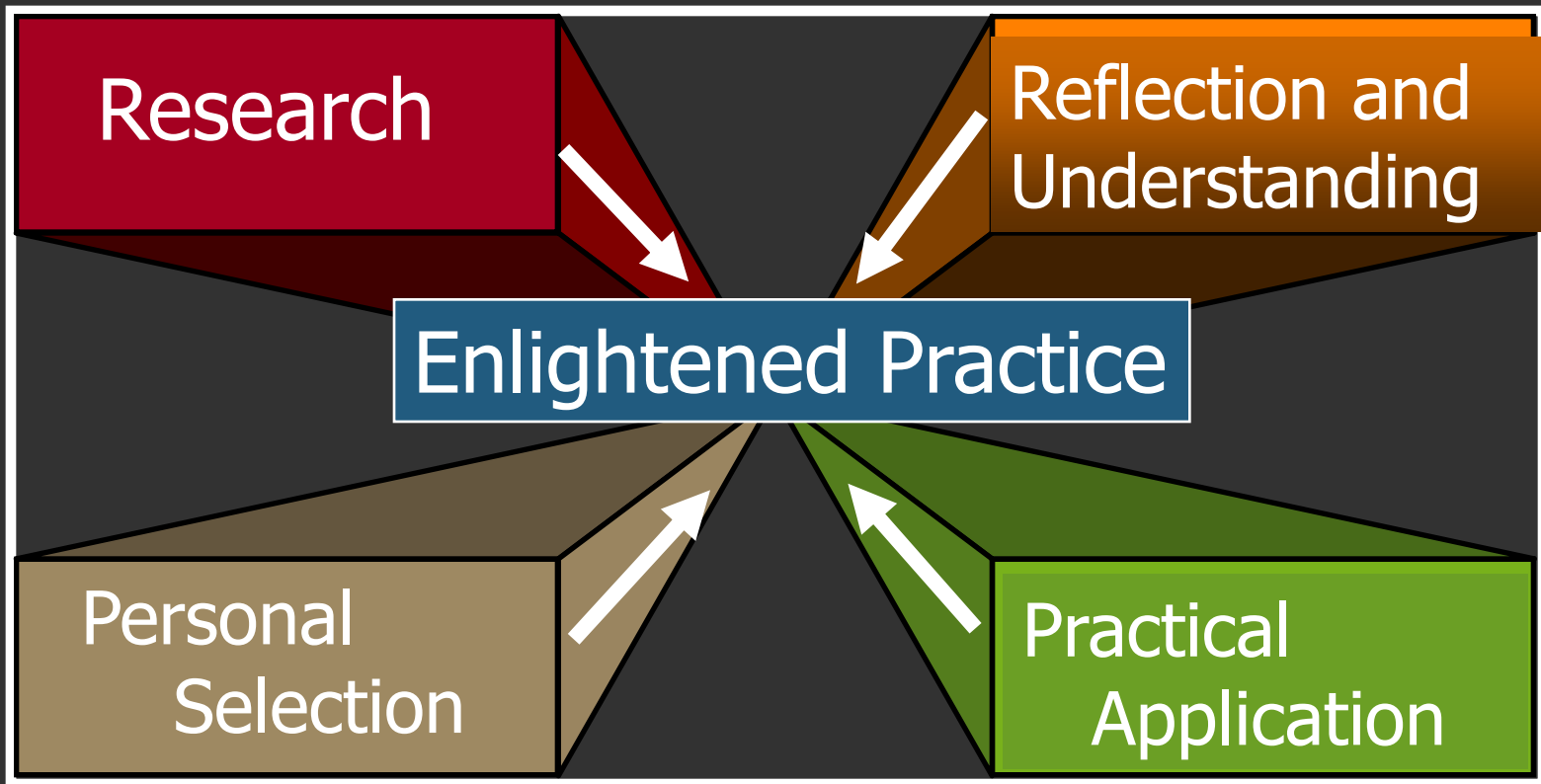


Backward Design -

3 more steps

3. Pinpoint evidence of understanding - assessments
4. Select strategies, experiences, and methods of delivery
5. Reflect, evaluate, refine and revise assumptions, content, and instructional methods

The essence of all of my planning



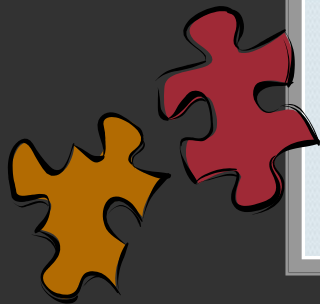
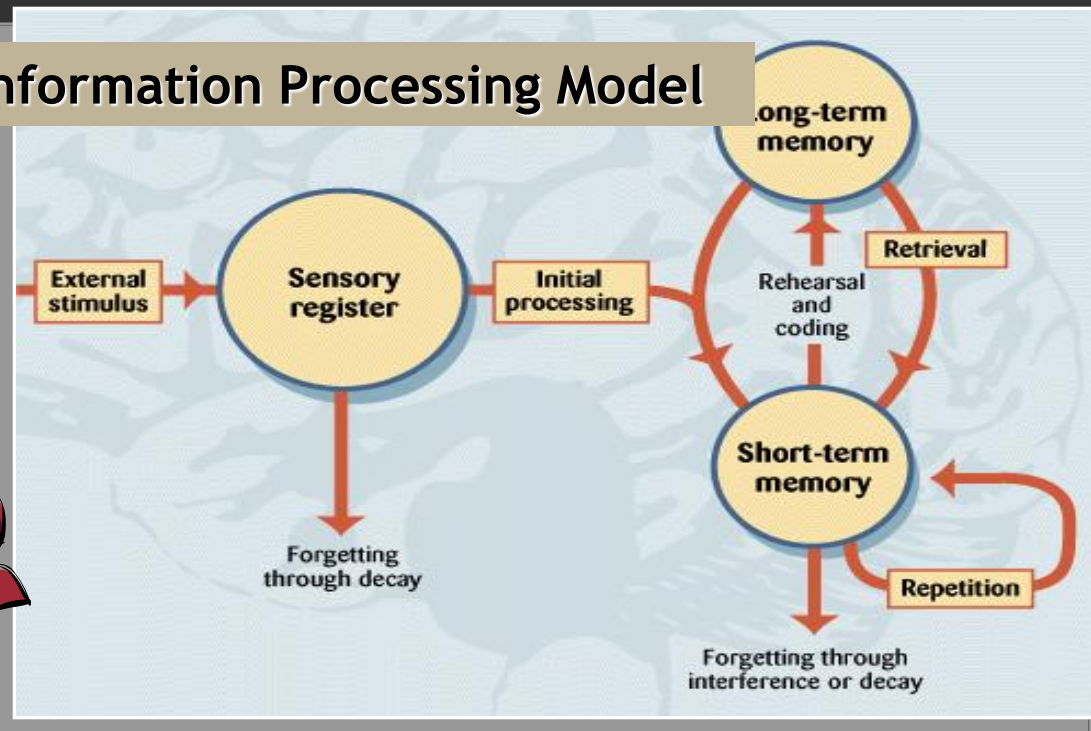
Exploring how humans learn



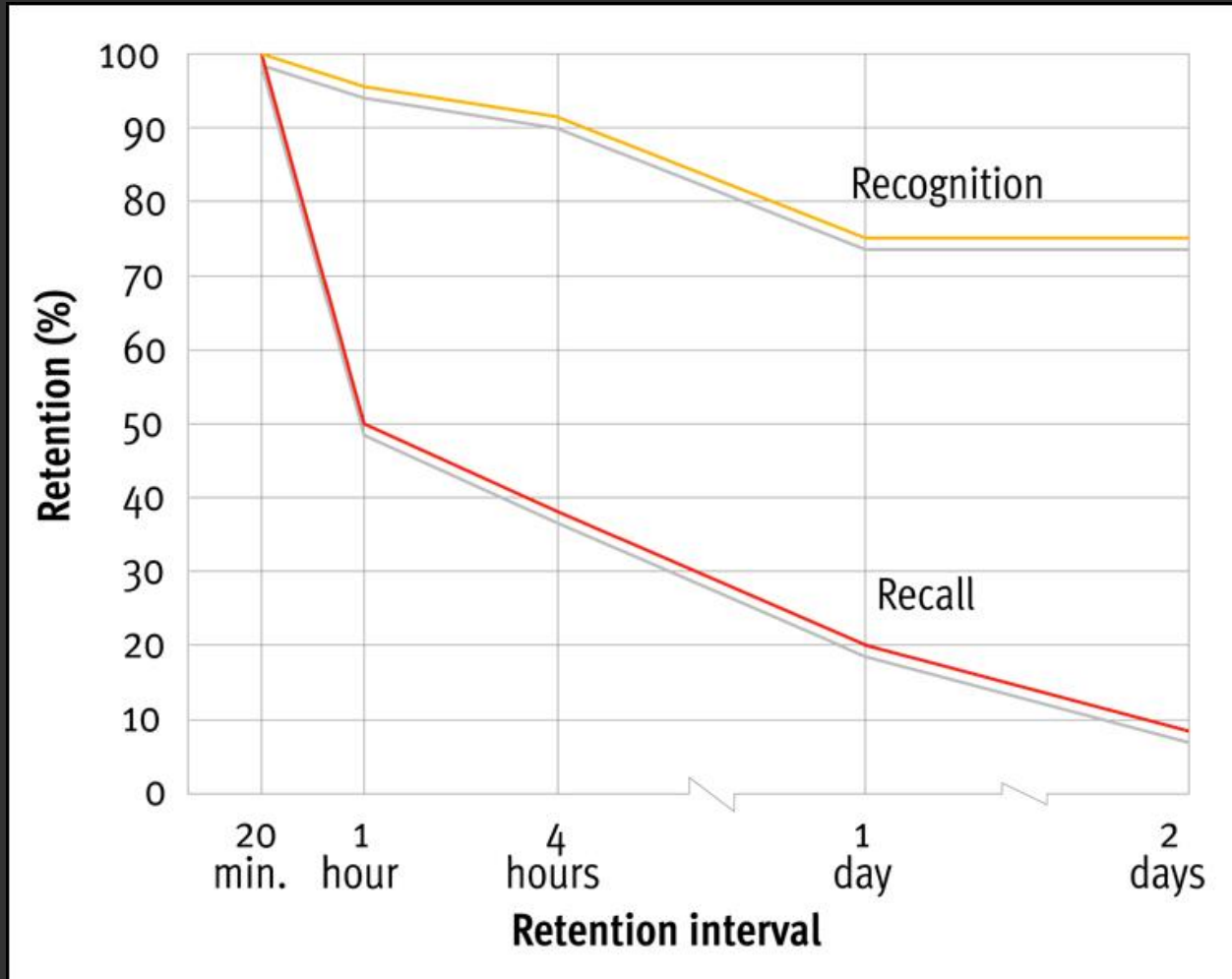
Basic understandings about how the humans mind works and retains information

Innovations in neuroscience and connections to education.

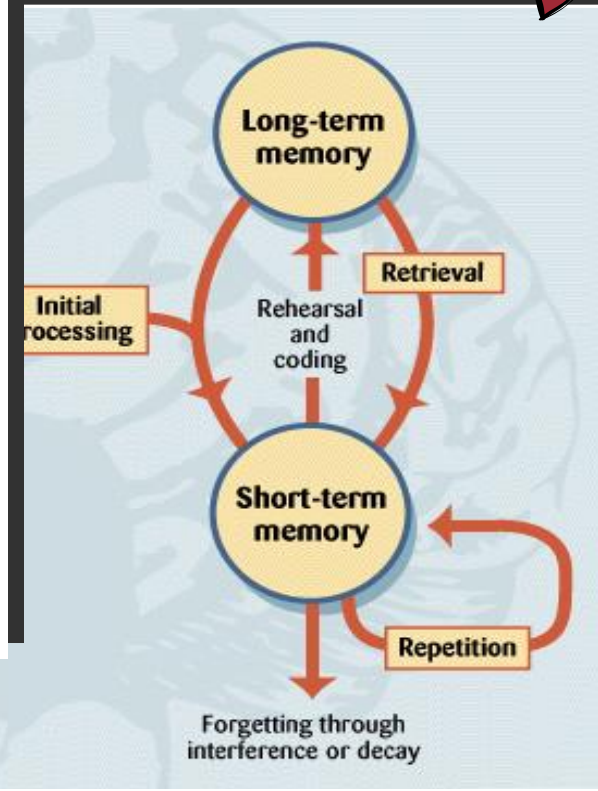
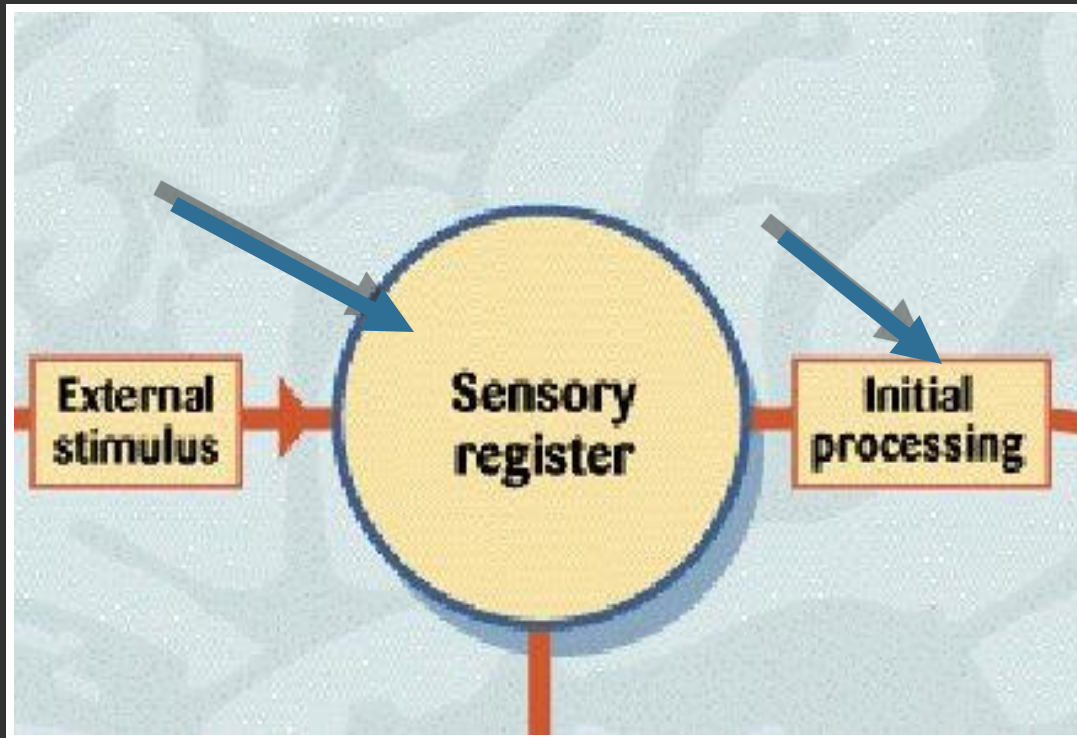
The Information Processing Model



Recall vs. Recognition Tasks

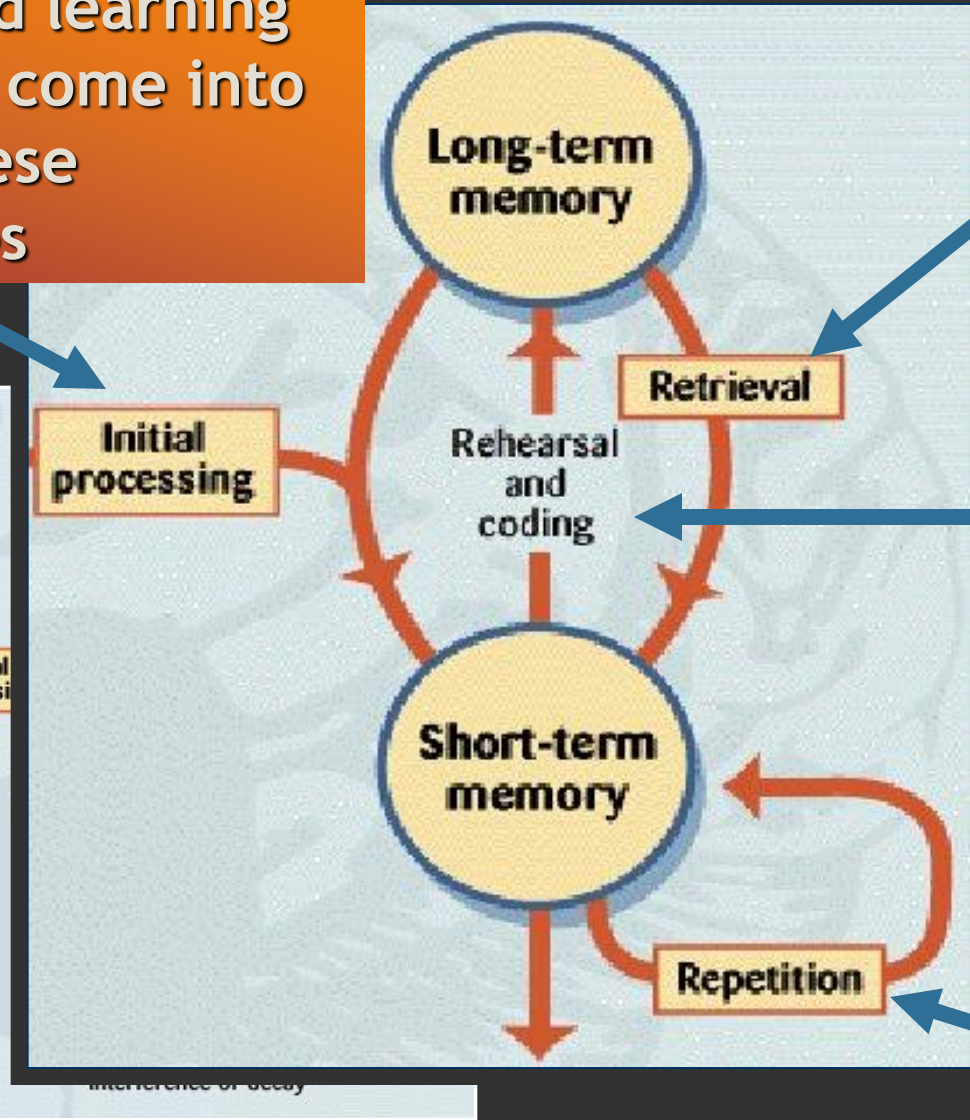
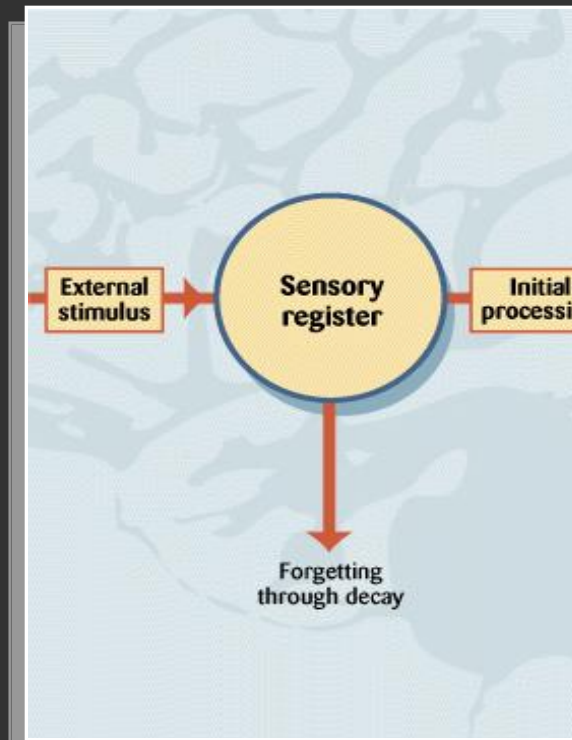


Where do things like personality, learning styles and learning modalities come in to play?



Know how humans learn and retain information

Both modality and learning style preferences come into play at these junctures



Know how humans learn and retain information



Constructivism – Why is it important?

Constructivism” is grounded in the belief that learners actively construct knowledge as they interact with materials, one another, the teacher, and with learning environments. “Learners do not passively receive information but instead actively construct knowledge as they strive to make sense of their worlds.” Cobb (1996)

Scaffolding – How can it help?



- Scaffolding is a way any instructor can help guide students through difficult tasks. In this process teachers provide clues and hints about how to proceed through a task.
- Procedures in scaffolding should be designed to help the learner reach the “zone of proximal development” (defined as a level of independence, as opposed to what the learner can do when aided by a competent adult or peer). The ultimate destination is to help the learner reach a level of independent action.

The human brain actively seeks novelty

- Switch focus and tasks - on average the brain switches focused attention in 15 to 20 minute timeframes
- Challenge students with interesting tasks, assignments and essential questions that help learners see patterns, and fit pieces of puzzles and problems together.
- Well crafted “essential questions” can also tantalize, engage, and motivate students moving them forward into the heart of a discipline and helping to create an appreciation for “doing” the work of a subject.

Human brain learns by recombining existing schema

- ❖ When humans experience cognitive discomfort they experience a sense of “disequilibrium.”
- ❖ We actively seek to right this situation by recombining schema, and seeking out solutions and new schema. This is how real learning occurs.

ENGAGE THEM IN PROBLEM SOLVING & PROBLEM FINDING

Brain based education (educational neuroscience) offers insights into how humans can learn more effectively.

Ken Bain highlights that the best college teachers know that:

- ❖ Knowledge is constructed and not received
- ❖ Mental models change slowly – Old models need to be challenged so that students have a reason to change and seek and create new schema
- ❖ Complex questions and good questioning techniques are crucial in creating knowledge
- ❖ Caring is essential – Students have to care about what they are learning – emotion is not only critical to remembering, it is crucial in being motivated to learn.
- ❖ Intrinsic motivation is much stronger and long lasting than extrinsic rewards
- ❖ Learning is developmental