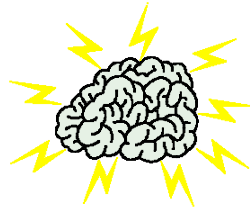


Brain-Friendly Strategies: Getting Started



As you'll discover by clicking on some of the other links in this website, there are hundreds of brain-friendly instructional strategies. How and where do you begin?

1. Start simple.

- Learn to use a few of strategies, but learn to use them very well. For example, you may want to develop a few techniques for framing, giving clear directions, moving learners into various states, grouping, making transitions, etc.
- As you use a technique, observe what you need to do differently the next time.
- To broaden your repertoire, develop *variations* of ones that work well for you.

2. Build your repertoire of strategies slowly.

- At first, use perhaps one or two strategies during a class session.
- You're better off using one or two effectively than using several poorly.
- Too many techniques can be confusing rather than effective, especially if you do not know how to use them well.

3. Incorporate music.

- Music is the simplest way to change learners' states.
- It can also be used as part of classroom rituals and routines.
- Develop a small repertoire of music of various types:
 - "welcome-to-class" music
 - music to build anticipation, suspense, or healthy stress
 - music to calm (35-50 BPM; use for deep breathing and stretching, too)
 - background music for seat work (50-70 beats per minute; no words)
 - celebratory music
 - transition music for changing from one activity to another
 - songs with lyrics that can be used instructionally (e.g., to teach inferences or figurative language in a reading or writing class)
- Use an MP3 player or CD player with small travel speakers.
- Take time to compile and organize music of various types before you begin using it.
- Choose music that suits the *age* of your listeners and the *state* (e.g., energized, relaxed, etc.) into which you want to move them.
- If you do not have time to use music, you're spending too much time talking.

4. Make the classroom setting more brain-friendly by using

- plants
- color
- visuals on the walls
- scents
- full-spectrum lighting (simulates natural daylight)