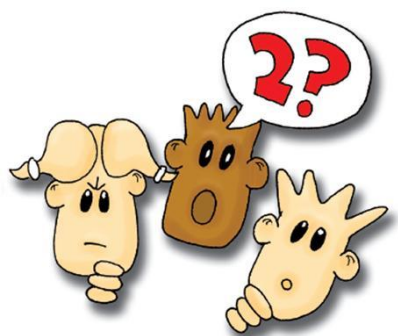


Novel Ways To Activate The Learner

Definition: Novelty is anything fresh new or original.

Novelty ensures 'attentional bias'.

"Unfamiliar activities are the brain's best friend," says Arnold Scheibel of the University of California (1994); he goes on to explain that the fact the brain is so stimulated by novelty, may be a survival response. Anything new may be threatening to the status quo; and thus, represents a potential danger. Once we have become accustomed to an environment or situation, however, it becomes routine and the reticular formation in our brain begins to operate at a lower level. Once a new or novel stimuli is re-introduced, the reticular formation gets alerted once again and the brain is stimulated to grow.



The latter fact is particularly interesting when considering Cooperative Learning Structures. The steps of a Structure provide the routine and ensure predictability and low stress, when combined with varied content the combination of structure and content means it retains its novelty and therefore engages the student. This combination makes the structures unique in their ability to cater for all learners needs.

Eric Jensen in his book '**Teaching with the Brain in Mind**' puts forward some practical suggestions for creating novelty:

- Change in location – move students to another part of the room, another classroom, the hall or outside.
- A surprising piece of music.
- Invite a Guest speaker.
- Use fun and energising rituals for class openings and closings and most of the repetitious classroom procedures and activities.
- A change in voice tonality, tempo, volume, or accent.
- Props, noisemakers, bells, whistles, costumes, singing, magic tricks, aromas, different lighting.

Teachers need not become circus performers. To the contrary, in the best classrooms the students are the 'show'. But teachers must recognise that constant changes in tempo and time are critical in learning.

- provide nourishment for your student's brain
- refresh your students
- increase their alertness
- create that brain friendly classroom with emotion, challenges and social interaction
- have FUN!

**"Too much novelty and not enough ritual leads to chaos.....too much ritual and not enough novelty leads to boredom."
Eric Jensen**



What do fun and energising activities have to do with learning? A lot! Brain research informs us that we must eliminate threat and provide a secure learning environment. Silly Sports and Goofy Games is a collection of teambuilders and classbuilders that will help you create solidarity and cohesion among classmates. Brain science also teaches us that students' brains need oxygen and glucose. Feed your students' brains with the energisers in this book. This eclectic collection of over 300 brain-friendly activities will help you make your classroom a fun place to be and in a matter of moments you can convert any class into a focused, high-energy community. Boost energy. Boost achievement. Release joy with the world's most comprehensive collection of indoor & outdoor, sport and game activities. Includes over 200, step-by-step, fun, and involving sports and games in nine categories, including: Terrific Tag, Happy Helpers, Beautiful Balances, Creative Coordination, Meaningful Movements, Crazy Challenges, Ridiculous Relays, Silly Sports and Goofy Games. Use 'em for classroom brain breaks. Use 'em for rainy-day fun. Use 'em for physical education. You will promote classroom community—with these games everyone Every part of the school environment affects character, for good or for ill. All too often playgrounds are part of the problem of peer rivalry and cruelty. Spencer Kagan's wonderful collection of games shows how to use playground and classroom activities to build the cooperative skills and community feeling so crucial to character development and sorely missing in much of our society.