

The Field Files

Volume 3, Issue 4

From The Office of Field Services

March 6, 2015

NOTED - Northeast Ohio Teacher Education Day JOB FAIR March 17, 2015- 7:30am - 5:00pm

at The John S. Knight Center in Akron. [Click here for a directions](#)



Important Reminders:

- This is an excused absence from the field
- Networking begins at 8:30, but in order to schedule an interview, plan to arrive as early as 6:00a.m.
- Only students attending or who have attended universities affiliated with NOTED may attend.
- **Students do NOT need to register in advance.** Just make sure CSU is on your resume
- **87 employers are registered. This is an increase from the last few years.** [Click here to view list of districts](#)

How can you prepare?

[Click here to view itinerary](#)

- Have printed resumes with you.
- Dress in comfortable (also professional) shoes.
- Wear a suit.
- Have a brief intro speech and an artifact ready for networking.
- Make a business card! Include your name, degree, license, and contact information.
- Ask the representatives you meet for their business card.
- Send a hand written thank you note.

Are You Making Learning Relevant? A Brief Look at How a Memory is Made



Information enters into the storehouse of our brains through our senses. Because teachers are accountable for student learning and student retention of learned materials, we need to have at least some understanding of the way information moves

through the brain and passes through the working memory into the long term memory.

Sarah Armstrong details the process of information coming into the brain through sensory memory in her book *Teaching Smarter with the Brain in Focus*. Students' senses are bombarded with stimuli and information. However, 99% of sensory data is discarded before it even makes it to the short-term/working memory (2008). **This means that students will**

retain 1 percent of the information presented to them at any given time -presenting a tremendous challenge to teachers.

Once information moves into the working memory, our brains determine whether to discard it or to move it to our long term memory and make it knowledge. The working memory then selects which information to keep, which to embellish, and what to delete.

Current brain research tells us information needs to be introduced in bite-size pieces (see page 2 for more on this) and in a way that is engaging. If we do not teach new material in a way that allows students to learn it, they will not turn information into knowledge — it will be discarded.

Armstrong's research asserts that information overload can cause a student to delete important pieces of content because he or she is overwhelmed by all that is presented at one time. A student might also lose bits of content that are presented if lessons are delivered in a way that is boring or lacks relevance. If a student slips into a daydream momentarily, he or she may not be able to piece together the new information and retrieve it properly.

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Formative assessment is essential; the only way to know that students have truly learned something is to check. **That is what formative assessment is about — you are checking to see if the information students have absorbed through their sensory memory has moved to their working memory and is moving to their long term memory.**

The working memory holds new information for approximately 18 seconds. If new information “hooks” onto something a student already knows, it will more easily hook onto an existing neuron to become more permanent (Wolfe, 2001).

Teachers have what feels like a million and 1 responsibilities at any given moment. We cannot see into students’ brains to know for sure that they have retained the knowledge we have bestowed upon them. While we are checking off our boxes that our lessons contain this, that, and the other thing, we have to have evidence of what the students brains contain at different points of the lesson and especially at the conclusion of the lesson.

A start for building a formative routine is to consider the 3 colors of a traffic light and use a variety of ways to gauge students’ grasp of new information and readiness to move ahead. Green means, “I’ve got this; it is stored in my hippocampus. Yellow means, “I may have been sleeping for some of it, and I’m a little fuzzy, but I can get to green with some help.” Red means, “Stop right now! I’m more lost than found.”

Consider making your own traffic light like the one pictured to the right, Having students use color-coded highlighters, or giving students laminated card stock in the three different colors to hold-up for quick formative assessment from their seats.

Remember that formative assessment, checking for understanding, is only valuable when you as the teacher use the data. What is it telling you? maybe you need to keep the pace, perhaps it is best to slow down, or students might be telling you to explain the

References:

Wolfe, P. (2001). BrainMatters: Translating research into classroom practice. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Make a Formative Assessment Traffic Light



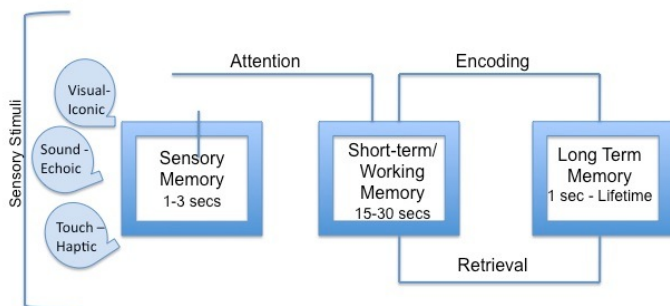
Shopping List

- Poster Board or Card Stock
- Contact Paper
- Avery Sticker dots or post-its
- Dry Erase Marker (optional)

Have a SMART board?

Try using the Plickers app to poll students for formative assessment. No student devices necessary! [Check it out here.](#) (Thanks for the suggestion Shannon Edwards!!)

Steps and Processes in Memory – Making



NOTE: Memory processes are involved with every level of Bloom’s Taxonomy (1956) and Revised Taxonomy (Anderson, Krathwohl, et al., 2001). The size, complexity and combinations of stimuli change, but the processes of stimulus, attention, encoding apply for each type of knowledge — from factual knowledge to conceptual, procedural and metacognitive knowledge.

Receiving new information in Bite Size Pieces helps us to properly encode knowledge in our long term memory. Like our stomachs, our brains can only process so much at one time. **Too much information leads to “overload” thus causing our brains to stop processing altogether** much like our stomachs when they are full. We have to figure out how much information is digestible for our students as we plan for teaching and learning.

Figure 1: Information catches our attention through our sense; next it moves to our short term memory. If we can hook new information to an existing neuron, it travels into our long term memory. See www.designforlearning.info for this visual and more information to unpack it.

Are you Designing Brain - Compatible Lessons?

It is true that so much of our time in the classroom is spent following pacing guides that prepare our students for a one size fits all assessment, but those pacing guides make up a small part of the equation. We have to decide **HOW** to teach the **WHAT** provided by the district curriculum. The how is far more important when we consider what is known about the brain. All the **WHAT** tells us in our lesson plan is the standard, objective, and learning target. As the classroom teacher, you are responsible for designing a brain compatible lesson.

Use this checklist below created by brain researcher Sarah Armstrong as a starting point. Read the statements and answer True (T) or False (F). If you answer True, make sure you can back it up with evidence. **A word of caution- it is easy to mark True to boost self-esteem, but really take time to pull these statements apart and evaluate your lesson designing practice.** If you find that an area is weaker than the others, make a goal for the rest of your student teaching to collect evidence of your growth in that area.

T or F	STATEMENTS
	1. I consistently teach the learning targets that are outlined in the curriculum pacing guides
	2. The assessments I use with students indicate that they consistently meet the learning targets.
	3. I regularly design lessons that differentiate for both remedial and enrichment students in my classroom.
	4. I activate my students' prior knowledge at the beginning of each new lesson, across all subject areas.
	5. I consistently use strategies that actively engage students as learners.
	6. I avoid "telling" and require students to do the thinking.

In her book *Teaching Smarter with the Brain in Focus*, researcher Sarah Armstrong asks readers "How effective are we at consistently encouraging students as thinkers?" Are we "telling" them what to think or allowing them to discover what they think? (Armstrong 2008).

References:
Armstrong, S. (2008). *Teaching smarter with the brain in focus*. New York, NY: Scholastic.

Important Dates

CSU Spring Break
March 8 - March 14 (OFS is open!)

NOTED job fair
Tuesday, March 17, 2015 - 8:30 - 5:00

Last Day to Withdraw
Friday, March 27, 2015

Taskstream Syllabus Assignments Due
Friday, April 10, 2105

Career Day
Friday, April 10, 2015

edTPA Due
Sunday, April 12, 2015

Taskstream Choice Artifacts and Summative Due
Monday, April 20, 2015

Non-academic Pre-reqs Due
Friday, May 1, 2015

Commencement
Saturday, May 9, 2015



Stay Informed!

Education in the Media

Locally

Impact of Kasich's new funding plan on area school ([click here](#))

District view of PARCC - pro and con ([click here](#))

Akron looking to move to year round schooling ([click here](#))

Nationally

White House possible veto of current GOP Bill ([click here](#))