

## **Looking Through Teaching Eyes, Sharla Dance, 2009**

Please read through these out loud, taking turns with your neighbor to read. Try to add a real life example of the principle from your own experience if you can.

**The brain craves variety, yet needs repetition.** You've probably been in a classroom where the teacher presents all the information in the same way, over and over again. Learning becomes a labor. You have to use all of your focus ability to even hear what is being said. The brain bogs down and starts to shut down! Yes, the brain craves variety!

**Whole to part to whole helps the brain remember.** When we learn only one line of a song, where does the brain catalog it? We do our brain a favor if we hear the whole song (often while concentrating on something else), focus in and learn one or two of the parts, then fit those parts we've learned back into the whole. When we hear the whole but only learn a part, our brain has a complete (whole) place to catalog that part, keeping the concept in tact even though we only really "know" a piece of it.

**Line upon line, precept upon precept is a great way to learn.** The brain needs exposure to a concept, then time to assimilate what was learned before taking in more of the concept. Have you ever had so much information presented that your eyes glaze over and your brain goes numb? Children have somewhat the same reaction when we teach all of the song at once. Presenting small parts of the whole, with time in between to process is a great way to teach a child a song.

**The attitude of a learning experience will be remembered far better than what was learned.** "I don't remember what we learned, but I remember how I felt," is an oft-repeated phrase. We will remember the attitude of delight, or boredom, or hurried-ness, or pressure, or curiosity much more than we will remember the concept being taught. In learning, the means does NOT justify the end! Our brain remembers the means much more clearly. What is the attitude of the children as they learn the song? What is the feel in the room?

**As we learn, we need a flow of concentration followed by a change of pace in order to keep our energy level balanced.** Tension followed by relaxation, climax with a resolution, high concentration then taking a break... we can see examples of this principle in well written literature, in a physical workout, or in the waves of the sea. As we teach a child a song, our presentation also needs to have an up and down flow of concentration and change of pace. Focused, short term learning leads the way, then a completely different type of activity, usually with movement to either re-energize or relax the body, is a great flow for learning.

**Every person's brain favors specific styles of learning.** Some people love reading maps, but others find it a maze. Many engineers learn best when they make logical conclusions, work through puzzles, and figure out codes or math approaches to solve a problem. In contrast, wordsmiths or those in the communication field often need to discuss a problem with words in order to wrap their heads around it. Do you need pictures rather than written directions? Can you remember words of a song better because of the melody? Each of these are a different mode of learning, sometimes called "multiple intelligences." Because we have so many different types of learners, we need to use as many of these intelligences as we can as we teach. Using a different approach and mixing up the types of activities every time we present a song reaches out to a different child every week.