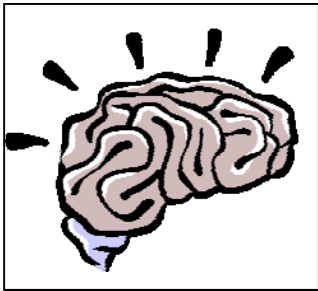




Smart Teaching Tips

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Increasing Intelligence



Topic #40 on the web site www.SmartTeaching.org describes the power of using concept models to promote staff unity on pursuing improvement directions for quality learning. Educators who stay abreast of new research on brain friendly teaching can and should regularly expand or revise the models they use to guide their teaching. This issue of Teaching Tips uses recently clarified research to suggest two concept models that can actually help teachers to promote growth

in the intelligence of students, intelligence being the ability to solve problems and create useful products. Here are the concepts:

1. **Students who are taught and shown that intelligence can be developed or increased are more motivated to learn and achieve more. They tend to increase their intelligence!** The mistaken assumption that intelligence is fixed permeated education for many years. Most educators are now well aware of the research showing that different intelligences can be developed; they have studied the work of Dr. Howard Gardner from Harvard University and others. However, many schools have not implemented specific instructional programs to make the reality of developing intelligence clear to students. It is also a reality that was not ever made clear to many of the parents of today's students. Therefore, some schools are filled with students who do not work hard in subjects they find difficult because they believe that "they are not smart enough." In an excellent magazine article entitled "The Perils and Promises of Praise," (Educational Leadership, October of 2007, pages 34-39) psychology professor Carol S. Dweck of Stanford University describes a path to correct this situation. That path is that every school have specific instructional programs that lead students to understand that intelligences can be developed or grown. Professor Dweck and others are involved in developing and testing a set of computer-based learning modules called "Brainology" to help students in this area. In directing a regional high school where the staff taught students how to develop intelligence or talents I observed the reality - - **Students learn more when teachers show them that intelligences can be increased.** This is an important concept model to

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pursue in every school and classroom.

2. **Sociability (sensitivity, tolerance, joy in working with others) promotes higher ability to solve problems together.** Again, most educators are familiar with Daniel Goleman's work on emotional and social intelligence. See Topic #13 on the web site www.SmartTeaching.org. Some schools have implemented instruction on emotional intelligence to equip students for more success in the workplace. New research seems to be providing even stronger evidence for the importance of this area. The evolving hypothesis is that social and emotional skills actually facilitate or hinder the development of problem solving ability (intelligence) in humans and some other animals. For an interesting magazine article on primatologist Brian Hare's research on this, read "Dogged" by Virginia Morell (Smithsonian, October of 2007, pages 40-42). The animal research, if it can be translated to humans, suggests that sociability is a precursor to development of cooperative problem solving ability. If some groups promote fear or hate of others in youngsters, the hypothesis suggests that the youngsters might not then become "smart enough" to be able to solve problems with others. This lack of being smart enough to solve problems with others then develops into political parties that fight with each other rather than solve problems for the citizens of their nation or into ethnic extremists who fight and kill rather than work for peace with other groups. **The instructional program in every school should teach social intelligence and make students full aware of the tragic results of not developing such intelligence.** Then well informed adult citizens will be able to consider carefully the social intelligence or lack of same in those running for political office and in extremist groups in the world.

By positively addressing these concepts, educators in any school can prepare youngsters to make important contributions to both productivity and peaceful cooperation in our world.

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