

Jean L. Radin, Ph.D.

Instructor in the Teacher Licensure Program

Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO

Creating an Enriched Learning Environment: Lessons from Brain Research

In order to promote dendritic growth, the brain requires stimulation, novelty, and problem solving opportunities. Many typical classroom strategies insist on veridical answers and singular approaches instead of encouraging creative insights, multifaceted answers and alternative thinking. An environment that has mostly predictable or repetitive stimuli fosters boredom in the brain, making it turn inward for new and novel stimuli. Hence, student achievement is not advanced and often discipline problems arise due to lack of stimulation. Creating an enriched classroom environment, both with tangible and intangible elements, is crucial for setting the stage for learning. Recent findings from neuroscience provide scientifically based understandings about the brain, making us rethink what we do in schools and classrooms. This session will help the participant understand how learning occurs at the neuronal level and how to create an enriched environment, based on brain research, to foster learning and student achievement.