

Adolescent Brain

February 2017

“The middle school classroom should be an active, stimulating place where people talk & share, movement is common & planned for, and the teacher uses a wide array of approaches to introduce, model & reinforce learning.”
(*Brain Development in Young Adolescents*, 2016, NEA, Peter Lorain)



7th grade student listening to instruction.

Adolescent Brain

- Moving from concrete to abstract
- Metacognition beginning
- Retain 5 – 7 bits of information at a time (engaging & rich material have a higher rate of retention)
- Brain growth isn't the same for all adolescents. They have different rates of growth.
- Emotionally sensitive
- Risk-taking has higher rewards than consequences
- Intuned with others feelings & emotions

How to help adolescents' growth

- Limit new information
- Connect new concepts to old known knowledge
- Vary the lessons (have lots of hands-on & opportunities for involvement)
- Opportunities to problem solve & critical thinking
- Teach the proper way to study
- Consistently review consistent expectations
- Process charts (do & review as time passes)
- Graphic Organizers
- Color code assignments/materials
- Articulate benchmarks & standards
- Listen
- Try to understand
- Trust & respect
- Allow low risk and discourage high risk behavior

Adolescents are at a time when they are trying new things and experimenting with life. They are trying to figure out who they are and where they stand. While some adjust well, some do not.

- 40% of boys reported having been in a fight in the last year
- 8% of high school students try to commit suicide
- Nearly 1/3 of women are pregnant by age 20
- Nearly half of the adolescent deaths are by accident
- More people in the adolescent age range commit crimes than in any other age range.

1. Boyce, Barry "Understanding the Teen Brain" December 2016, pages 70 – 71 v.4 n.5

2. Lorain, Peter "Brain Development in Young Adolescents", NEA