

Brain Rules (2008)
Dr. John Medina
(Pear Press, Seattle, WA)

Reviewed by Loreena D. Parks, Sp.A.
Associate Professor, EMU – Department of Special Education

This book provides 12 principles for surviving and thriving at work, home and in school. Even if you have read other books on the brain do not pass this one up. The *Brain Rules* might just influence and change the way you teach and the way you work forever!

In this book “you will discover how:

- * Exercise improves cognition
- * Every brain is wired differently
- * We are designed never to stop learning and exploring
- * Memories are volatile and susceptible to corruption
- * Sleep is powerfully linked with the ability to learn
- * Vision trumps all of the other senses
- * Stress changes the way we learn

In the end, you’ll understand how your brain really works – and how to get the most out of it.”

There are 12 chapters in this book, one for each of the principles/rules Dr. Medina discusses:

- Exercise
- Survival
- Wiring
- Attention
- Short-term memory
- Long-term memory
- Sleep
- Stress
- Sensory integration
- Vision
- Gender
- Exploration

Make sure you take a special tour of the book utilizing the included DVD and explore the following website (www.brainrules.net).

The *Brain Rules* might even beg to be read more than once.

- 1) skim it

- 2) read it quickly
- 3) read it slowly - highlighting information you might want to remember and share with someone else

There is a wealth of information in Dr. Medina's book. I was especially taken with the following ideas:

- Providing students an opportunity to listen to a Math or Social Studies lecture as they walk 1 to 2 miles per hour on a treadmill
- Since audiences check out after 10 minutes, one can keep grabbing them by telling narratives or creating events rich in emotion
- Repetition provides the fixative for something to be learned and stored in memory
- "Siesta" time is natural and important
- One learns best when several senses are stimulated at one time
- The importance of gender differences being noted and celebrated
- We can create neurons and learn new things throughout our lives

Please e-mail me at (lparks1@emich.edu) with the ideas that you are taken with as you read *Brain Rules*.

"It is the ultimate intellectual flattery to be born with a
mind so amazing that brain scientists voluntarily devote
their careers to studying it." (Page 97)