

Barriers to Learning

From birth we are primed to learn
So what gets in the way?

Learning Environment

- Stimulating – encourages inquisitiveness
- Affects the senses (outdoors)
- Link to Erikson – not getting the response from significant others = barrier to learning
 - Carry that limitation through to subsequent stages

Normal pathway

- Information is perceived (subconsciously)
 - Bombarded by stimuli (most of which we filter out)
 - How significant?
 - Passes into the limbic system (air traffic control centre)
 - If it is significant (growth or threat) and doesn't trigger our stress response then we become conscious of it (thinking it) – move to the cortex (aware)
 - Spreads to where it needs to go = reflection
- Smell – directly linked to cerebellum – by-passes the normal, short cut to significance

Stress Pathway

- Information is perceived (subconsciously)
- Passes into the limbic system (air traffic control centre) & to the cortex
- Judgement is made to level of significance (threat) subconsciously (amygdala)
- Thought process goes equally to the cerebellum (fight or flight) before the results of conscious deliberation have a chance to come in. The fight or flight response shuts down conscious thought activity.
- Result is reaction before being consciously aware (eg road rage)

When under stress

- under stress our brains release two hormones:
 - adrenaline (fight or flight)
 - latterly cortisol (prolonged stress)
- This is what we know as ‘Emotional Hijack’
- Stressful environment will have higher than normal cortisol levels

What have we learnt?

- Higher order thinking = reflective
- Lower order thinking = reactive
 - Blame
 - Shame
- Balances on the limbic system
- Difference between reflective and reactive thinking is choice

How to remove the Barriers?

- Creating a low stress environment
- Reducing the threats
- Increasing levels of nurturing
- Building trust (becoming significant)
- Becoming aware of who we are (reflective learning strategies, Dewey, 2 stars & a wish)
- Exercising choice = managing behaviour (coping strats, magic spots, time outs, choice)