



Over the past 30 years neuroscience has radically changed our ideas about the brain and how it works. Rather than specific portions of the brain being forever dedicated to one function, the brain is relatively plastic and changes over time in response to both the outside environment and inside commands. This has enormous implications for education, the most basic being that all students can learn. How they learn, however, is a bit more complex can be a paradoxical balancing game. For example, the same practice and repetition that develops expertise also closes the mind to new ideas and ways of doing things. In education we tend to position repetition against novelty or enjoyment, but in learning all three must be present. Reasoning has often been placed in opposition to emotion and we have a right brain – left brain dichotomy in our thinking about how the brain works. Reasoning and learning, however, turn out to be emotional experiences. Emotion is always involved. Perhaps most surprisingly, and the conclusion of Sharon’s book, is that the mind can train the brain to perform differently. It is a kind of “mind over matter” world.

This session looks at these outcomes of brain research and more with a particular emphasis on their possible application in the classroom.

Syfr’s Summer Retreat at The Hyatt Regency Lost Pines

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