

## How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience, and School (1999). The National Academies' Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education (CBASSE)

**Influence Index: 28**

### Citation

Bransford, J. D., Brown, A. L., & Cocking, R. R. (Eds.) (1999). *How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience, and School*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

### Description

The National Academy of Sciences established the Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education (CBASSE) at the request of the U.S Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in order to examine the prevention of reading difficulties in young children.

In 1999 the Commission released *How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience, and School*, which detailed the group's findings on learning processes. Report editors John D. Bransford, Ann L. Brown, and Rodney R. Cocking bring together findings from the fields of neuroscience, cognitive and social psychology, human development, and emerging technologies in order to provide a comprehensive perspective on the processes of effective learning and the environments in which learning best takes place.

Key findings from the Commission include the idea that students come to the classroom with preconceived notions of how the world works. If these notions are not engaged, students may fail to grasp new concepts that they are taught. For example, students may sometimes acquire knowledge for the purposes of a test but later revert back to their preconceived notions outside the classroom.

The report also identifies several factors necessary for developing competence in a specific area. These include: a strong base of factual knowledge; understanding those facts and ideas in a conceptual framework; and organizing knowledge in a way that allows for retrieval and application. The Commission's findings also address the need for a "metacognitive" approach to instruction which allows students to define their own learning goals and monitors their progress in achieving them.

*How People Learn* also highlights a number of strategies to facilitate effective learning. For instance, schools and classrooms should be learning-centered, with teachers drawing out preexisting understandings and providing many examples in order to build a firm foundation of factual knowledge. The Commission has also advocated the use of formative assessments, which allow teachers to gauge students' preconceptions and progress toward learning when developing instructional plans.

### For More Information

*How People Learn* is available from the National Academy Press at [www.nap.edu](http://www.nap.edu).