

# *This is how I learn*

*An interactive workbook for boys to  
explore their learning preferences.*



Vol 2 in the Boys can be Heroes series  
A Voice & Choice Logbook

*Jack Canon  
Boney Bum Books*

Why I wrote this workbook.

While growing up I thought I must have been adopted. My older sisters seemed to be so much smarter than me. They never got into as much trouble at home or at school as I did.

All through primary school I felt like the class idiot. People never seemed to know the real me. I had great ideas and thoughts going through my head. The problem was, I couldn't share them verbally or through writing. My drawings were great but a bit wild for most people to care about.

When I started high school things changed. Suddenly I started doing well in school and socially as well. It seemed like I was just getting better at everything as I got older. I used to stutter a bit when I felt pressured. I was nervous when getting back assignments and would have happily died rather than stand in front of the class to recite a poem or talk.

I learned to express myself more clearly through pictures. I passed exams by using pictures to represent key ideas that I needed to learn. My writing improved (ideas not the handwriting) so I was able to gain success in tests.

My life now is so much easier because I select visual and hands-on material for my self-learning. I might go to uni one day, but right now I am finding myself through creating visual ways to share good ideas.

By undertaking the pages in this workbook, you might find that you have strengths and weakness in your learning. Once you understand how you learn you can change your behaviours

in the classroom and other learning environments to better suit yourself.

Good luck.

Jack Canon

Boney Bum Books

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## *A Voice & Choice Logbook*

### Writing and self-reflection.

#### **Work with thoughts on paper.**

In this voice and choice workbook your writing draws information out of our heads and onto paper. When we can visually see the information, we can do more with it. We can group it, synthesize it, add to it and change it. As we work with the information on paper, we bring it back into our minds - this is how most of us learn. Most creative people doodle and make lots of notes and lists.

#### **Begin to think with *all* of your brain.**

Let's review the functions of the two hemispheres of the brain. The left brain is logical, rational and linear, while the right brain is more creative, spontaneous, intuitive and fun. The left brain is better with facts, events, things and quantity. The right brain is better with relationships of things, wholeness, concepts, spirituality, feelings, emotions, qualities, meaning, essence, purpose, integration, balance and harmony. The left brain is very direct while the right brain is more indirect, metaphoric and symbolic. The left brain relates more to individual words, while the right brain relates more to language, prose and poetry, music, images, beauty and pictures.

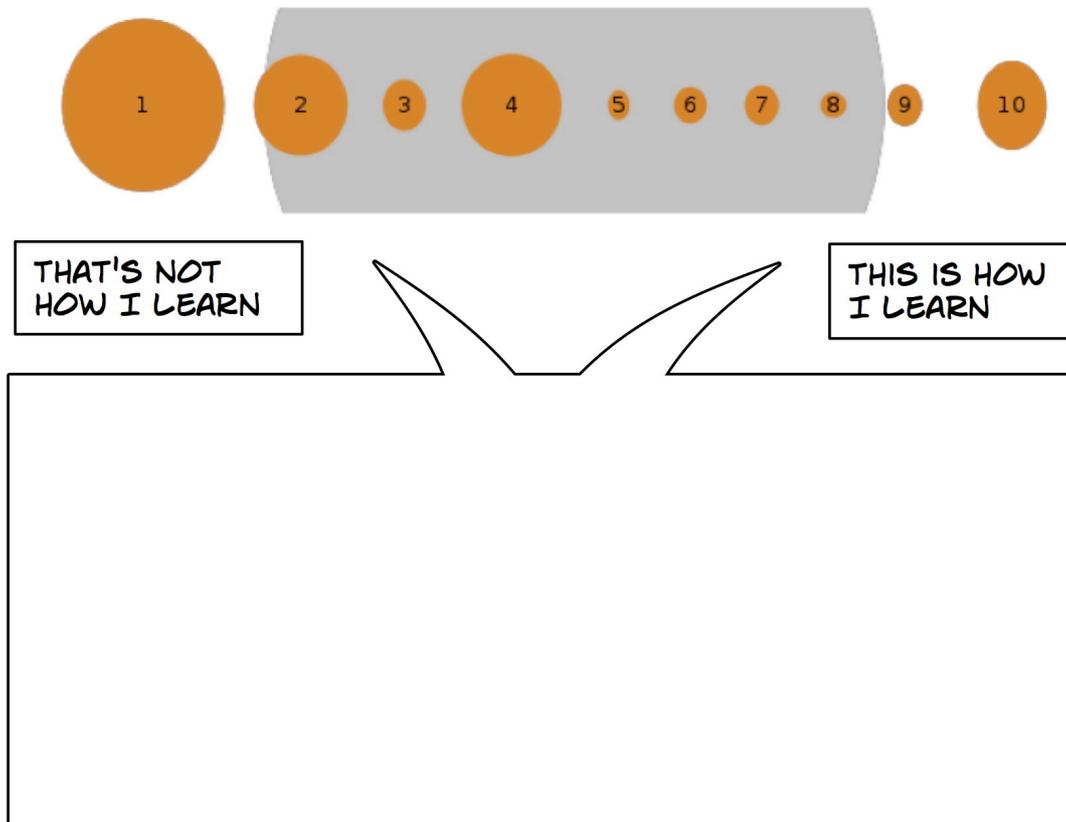
Research has found that the left brain will remember only 7 or less items when presented with a list. As the list becomes larger, the left brain has a hard time comprehending it. This situation invites the right brain to engage and use its big picture, intuitive approach. The right brain will see the list from new perspectives. When you stand back from your writing and take a bird's eye view, this allows the integrating right brain to do its processing.

On each page you will find a statement followed by this scale and writing box.

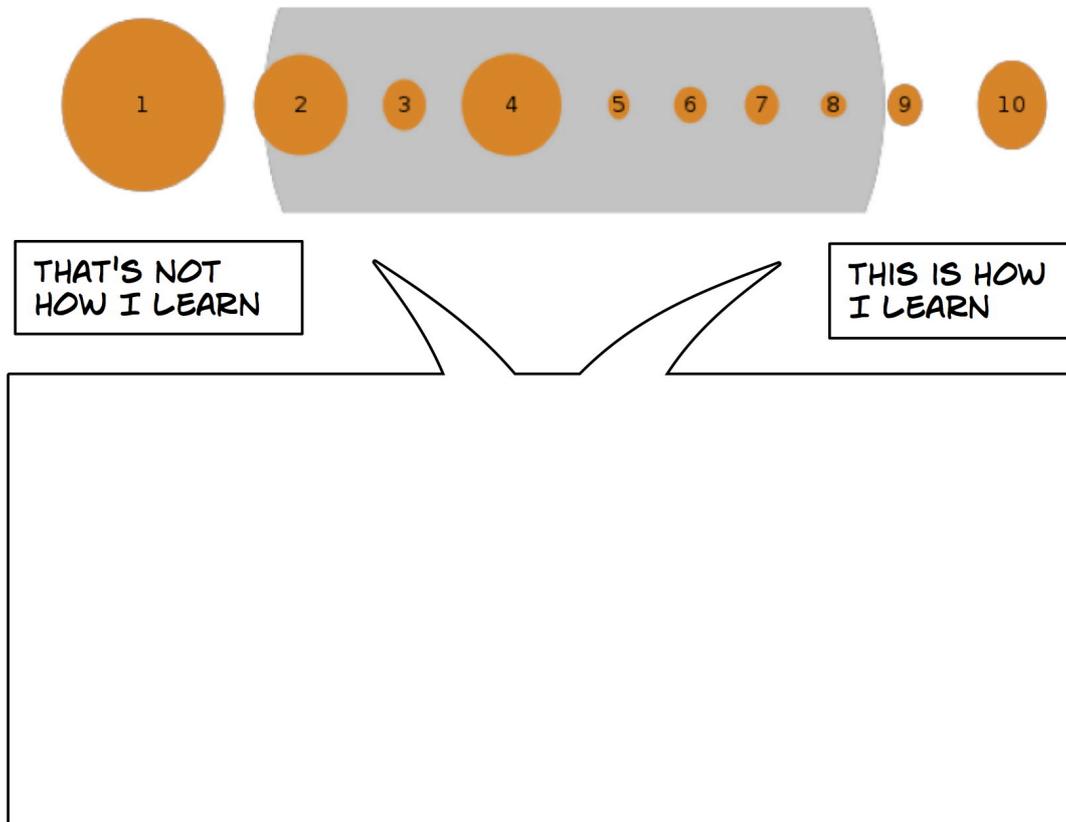
The form consists of a horizontal scale with 10 orange circles numbered 1 to 10. Circles 1, 2, 4, and 10 are significantly larger than circles 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9. Circles 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 are contained within a grey rounded rectangular background. Below the scale are two boxes: a rectangular box on the left containing the text "THAT'S NOT HOW I LEARN" and a speech bubble on the right containing the text "THIS IS HOW I LEARN". Both boxes have lines pointing towards a large, empty rectangular writing box centered below the scale.

After reading the statement think about whether or not what is said applies to you. Circle a number according to how this statement is true for you. Near zero if it does not apply and closer to 10 if it reflects your reality. Then write a few comments about how you react to the situation described.

I am more creative than ever. My head is bubbling, churning with ideas. My teachers see my attempts at school work as erratic and uncontrolled. I kind of think my work is fast-flowing and real, at least to me. I can't explain it. If the pictures and words I use don't make sense to others I don't really care. They are my interpretation of the world.



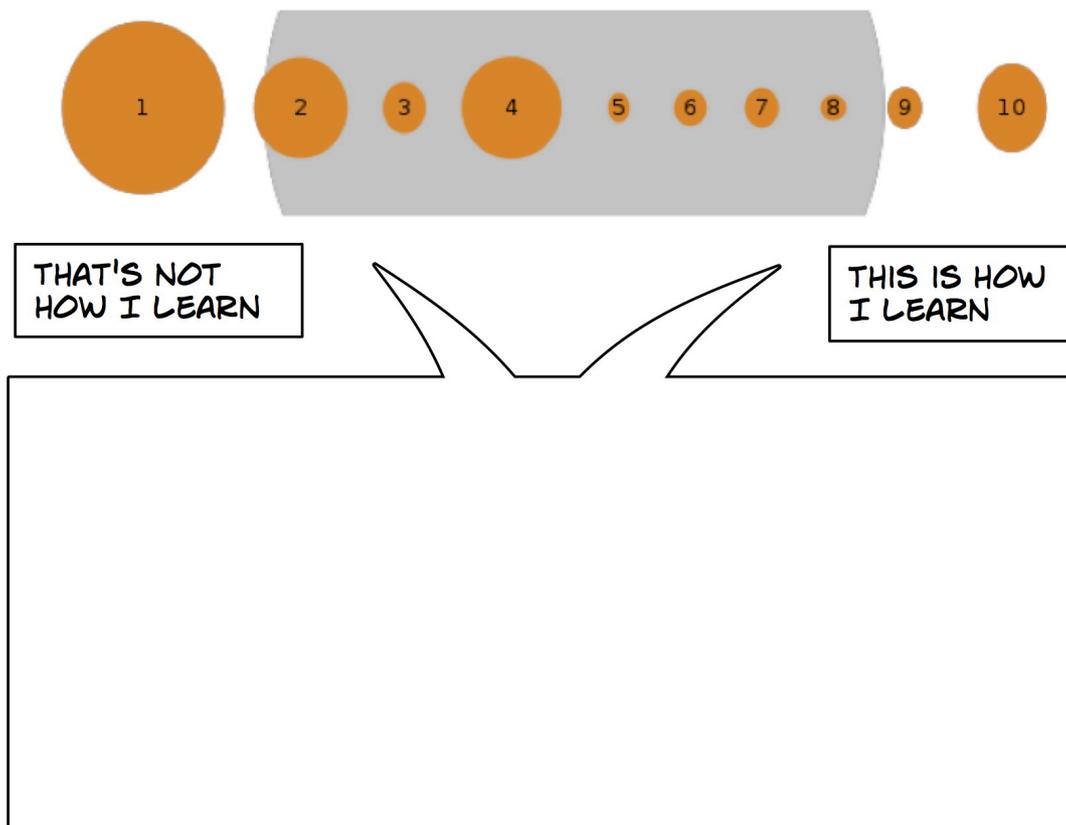
I have always withdrawn my mind into secret spaces. Others can choose to understand me or not. I don't care to explain in words what I am saying through pictures and movement.



*I can't shake off the idea that what is being said is too clever for me.*

*I'm a no-hoper, I'll never make it, there's no point even trying, I don't stand a chance.*

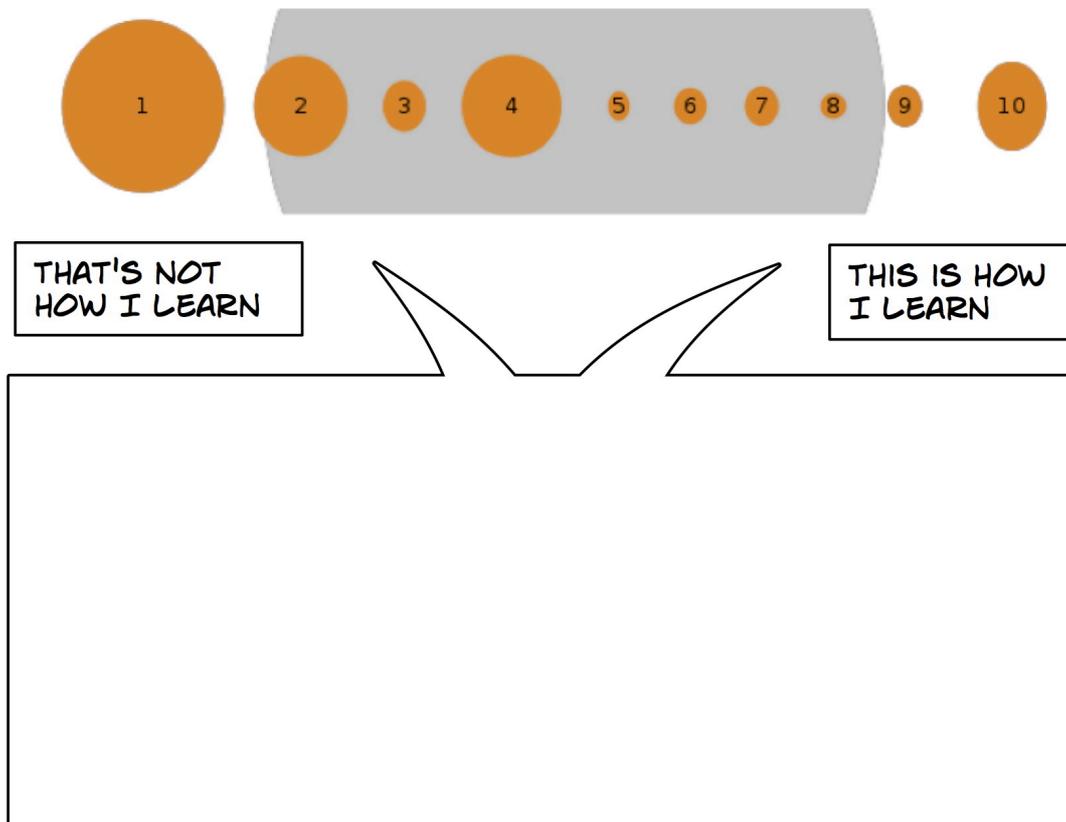
*Fear is the single most important factor of my schooling. It is the padlock that stops learning from entering my head.*



*I feel the loneliness of the dunce,  
ashamed of never being able to do  
what I'm supposed to be doing.*

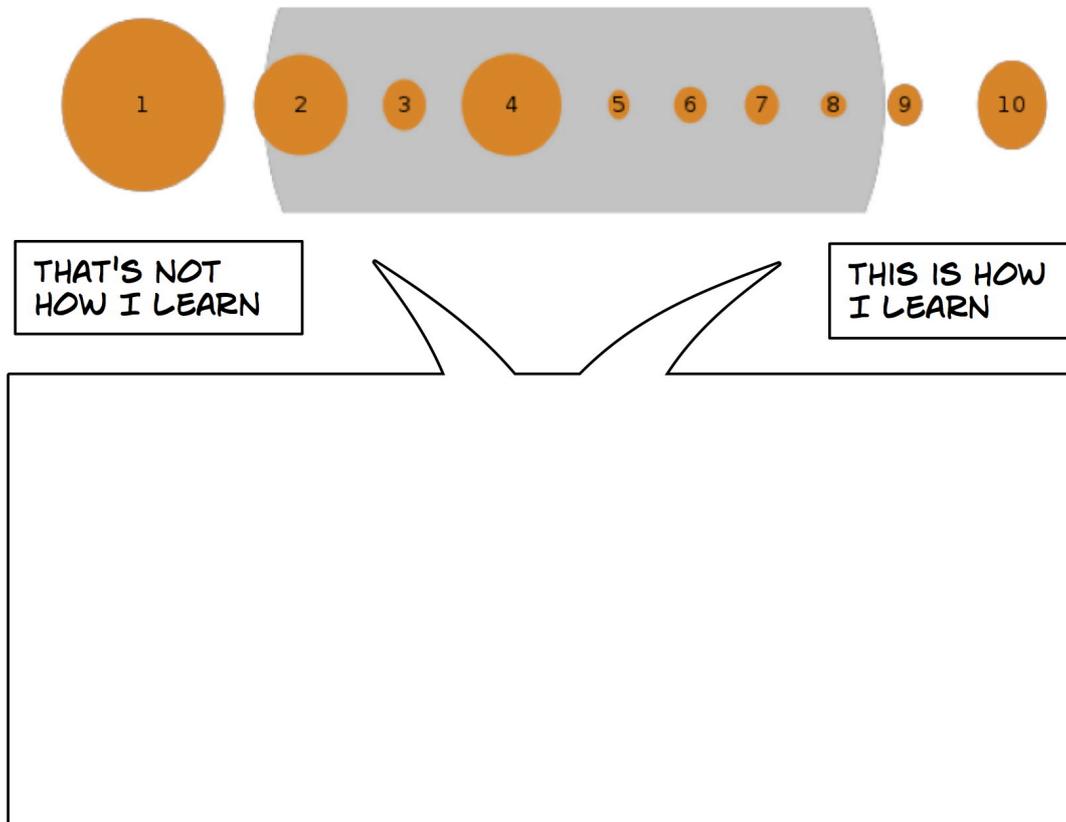
*I have an urge to run away.*

*I only exist during the breaks, lunch  
and recess. In class I am made to  
feel like an alien.*

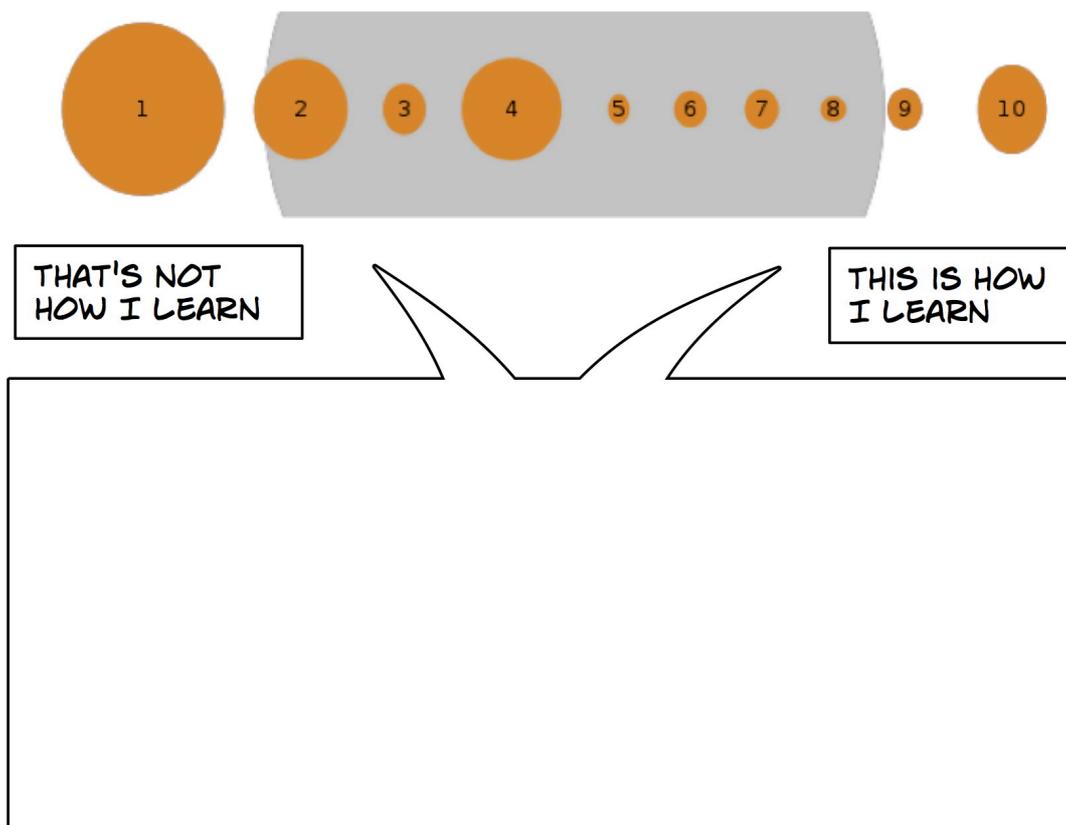


*I'm not clever or hard-working. I'm not interested. I get headaches from being stuck with all this paperwork. I'm hopeless.*

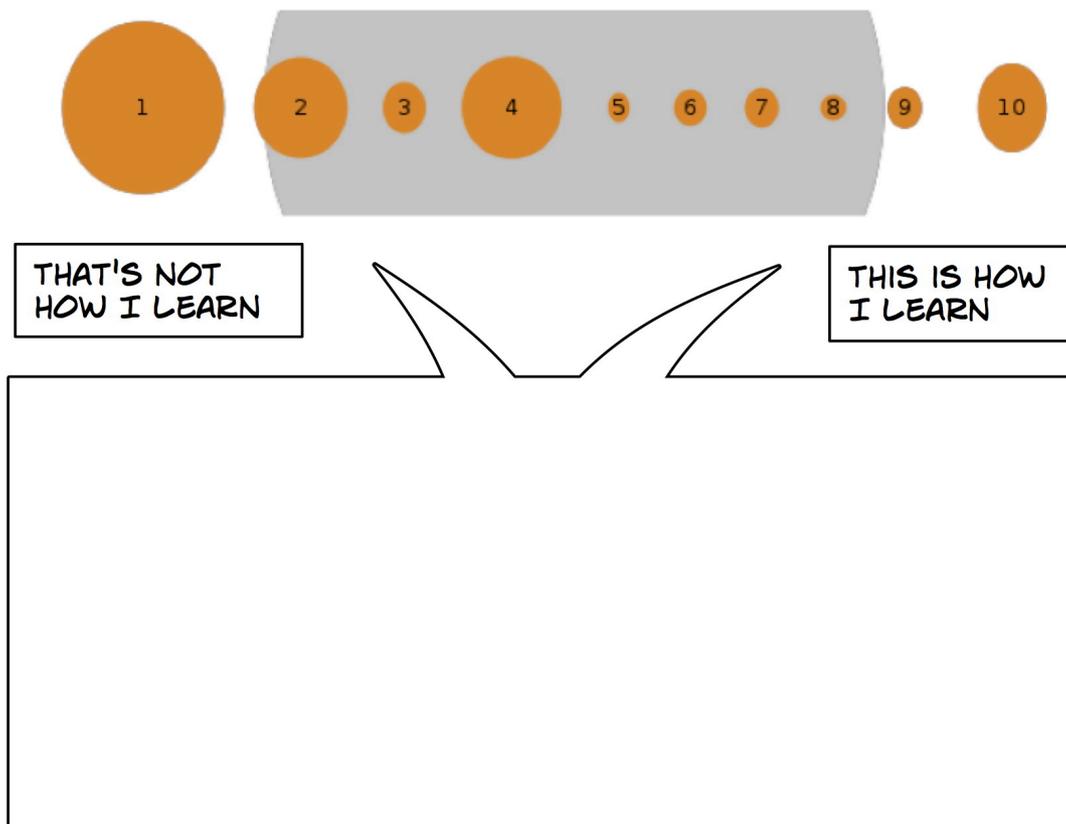
*What's left?*



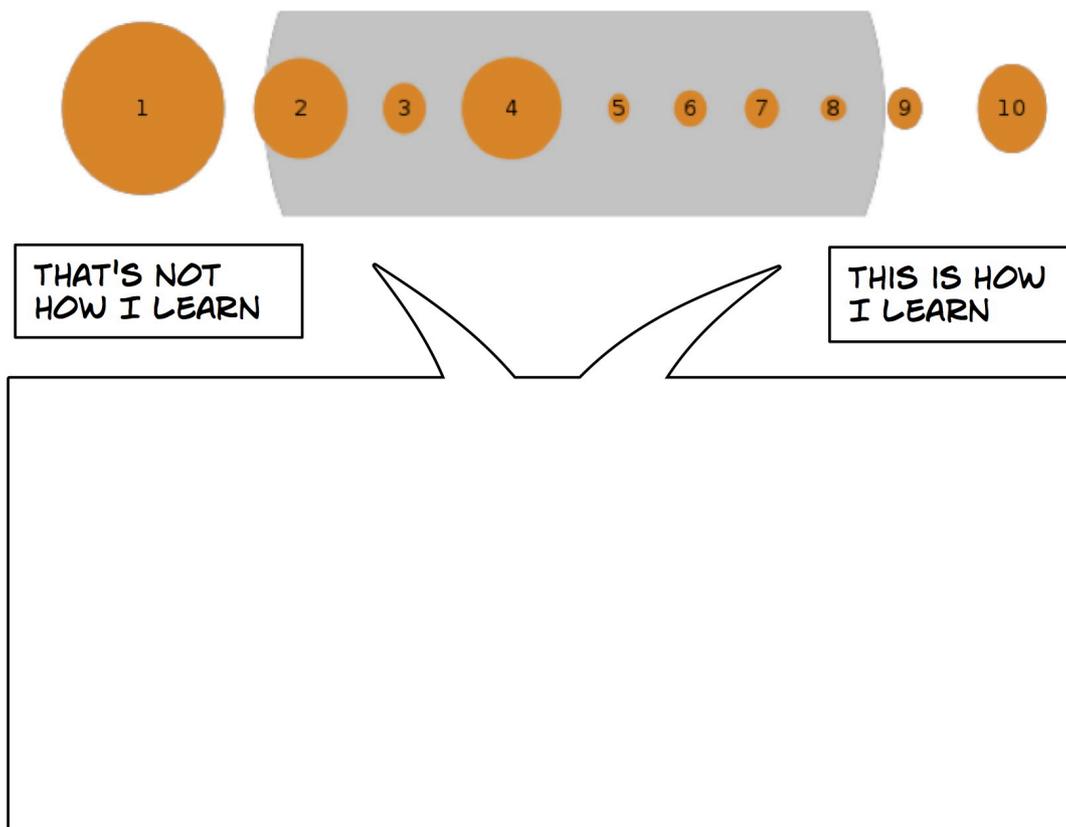
Kids seem to come in two basic designs: some are good at school and some are good at creating. There are also some who are good at both, and everybody can become better at one or the other. Those who are good at school can become better at creating, and those who are good at creating can become better at school.



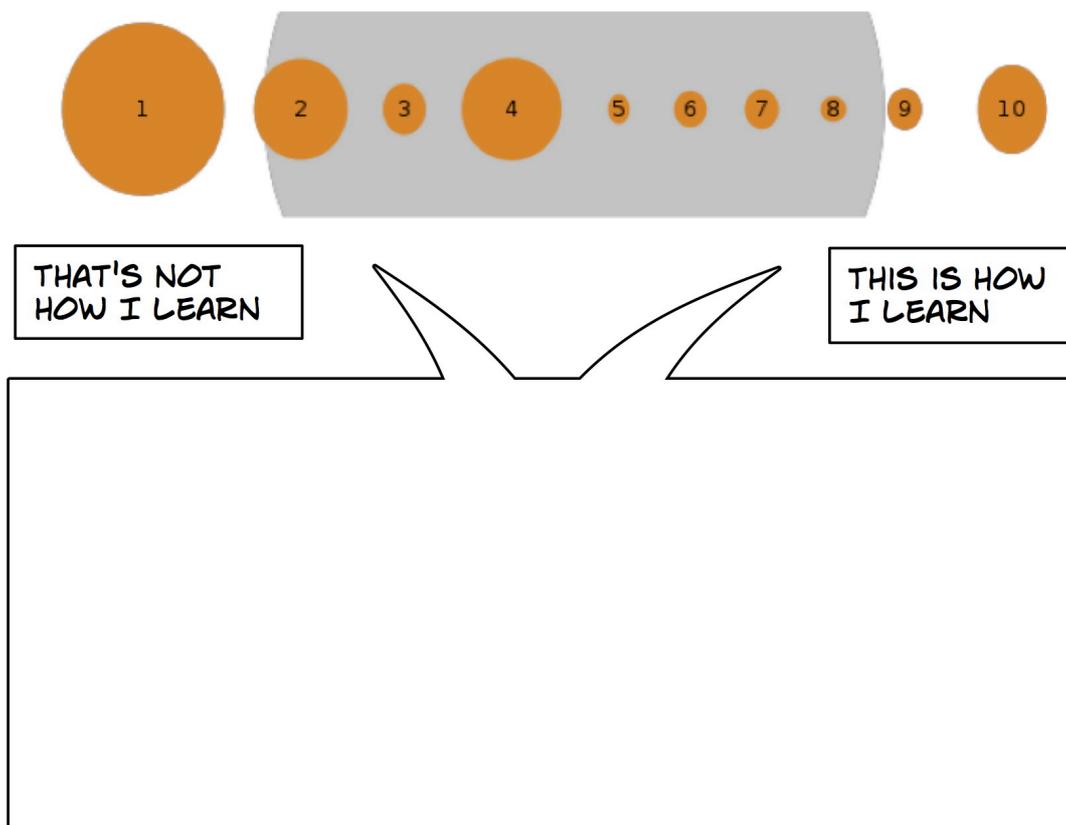
Individuals who exhibit stronger visual-spatial abilities than auditory sequential abilities are considered visual-spatial learners. They do extraordinarily well on tasks with spatial components: solving puzzles, tracing mazes, duplicating block designs, counting three-dimensional arrays of blocks, visual transformations, mental rotations, envisioning how a folded and cut piece of paper would appear opened up, and similar items.



As a toddler, I liked to see how things work, and I enjoyed pulling things apart to see if I could reconstruct them. When given an ordinary toy, I would play with it long enough to figure out how it works, and most likely never touch it again.

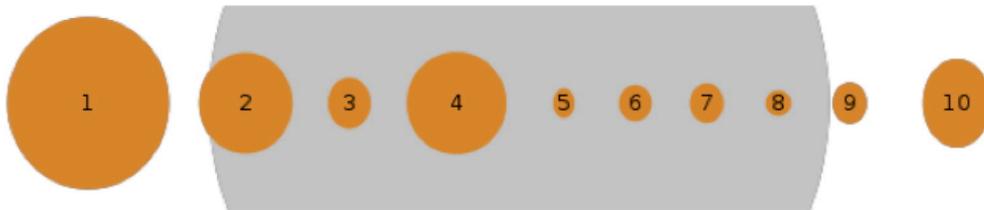


As a child I was usually fascinated with puzzles and mazes, and was an expert with them. I spent endless hours building with construction toys (blocks, lego sets,) or other materials, and my constructions were often quite sophisticated and intricate in design. I began quite young to have a lifelong love affair with numbers and numerical relations.



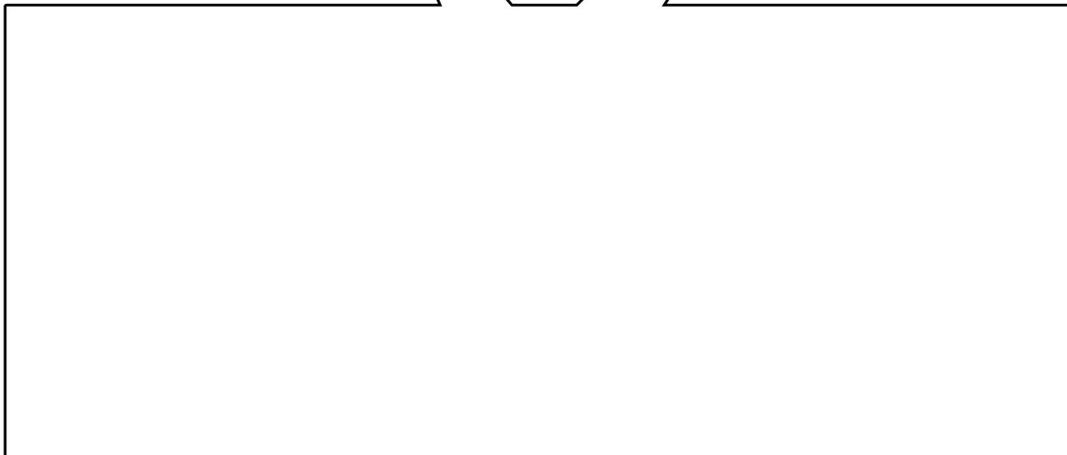
*I have/had difficulties with*

- Attention
- Spelling
- Timed tests
- Handwriting
- Articulation
- Memorisation
- Sequencing
- Long written assignments
- Phonics
- Reversals

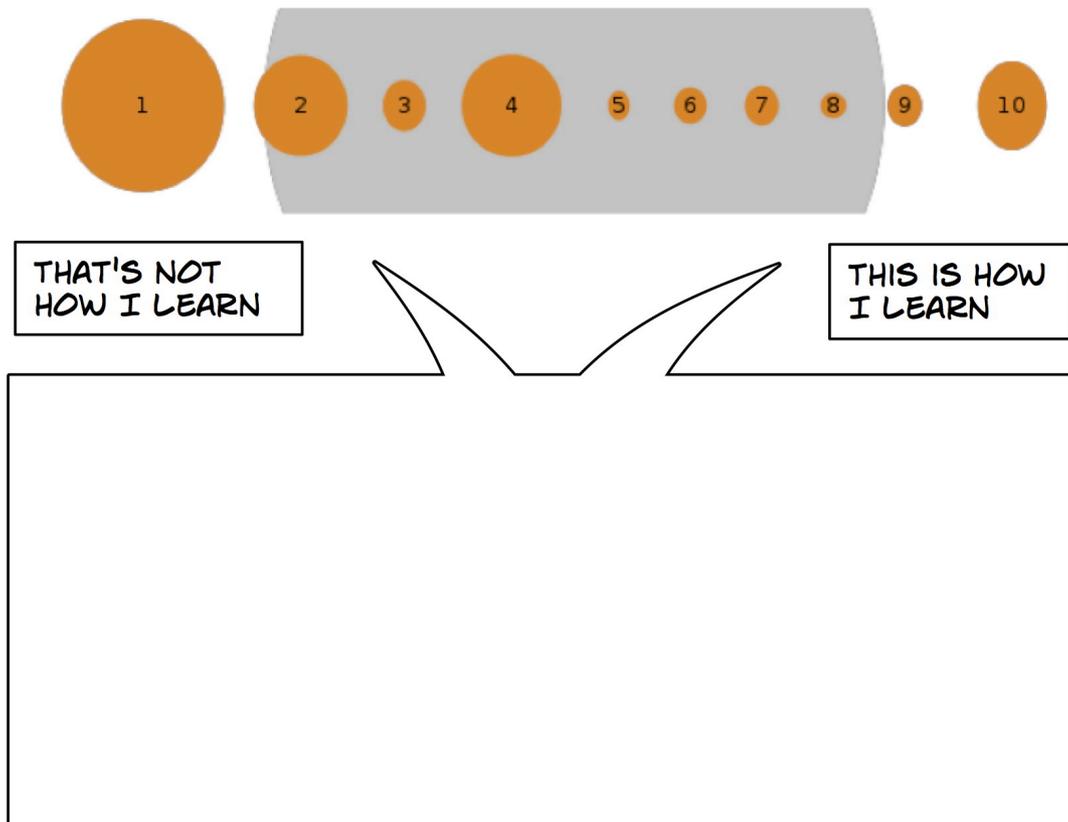


THAT'S NOT  
HOW I LEARN

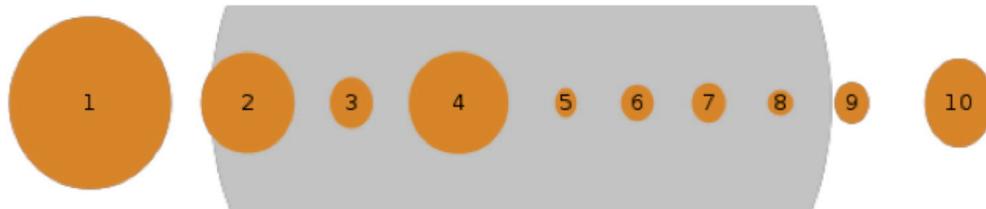
THIS IS HOW  
I LEARN



If your parents were both good at school, you stand a better chance of being good at school as well. If one of your parents was not so good at school, you might struggle with school, too.



Which of these things are you good at:  
Drawing - Taking things apart - Making new things out of old stuff - Singing - Building with Legos - Playing computer games - Puzzles - Making friends with animals - Knowing how to get to places you visited once - Making up silly jokes - Making up stories - Making someone who is sad feel better - Hugging - Pretending to be somebody else - Playing by yourself - Exploring - Arguing

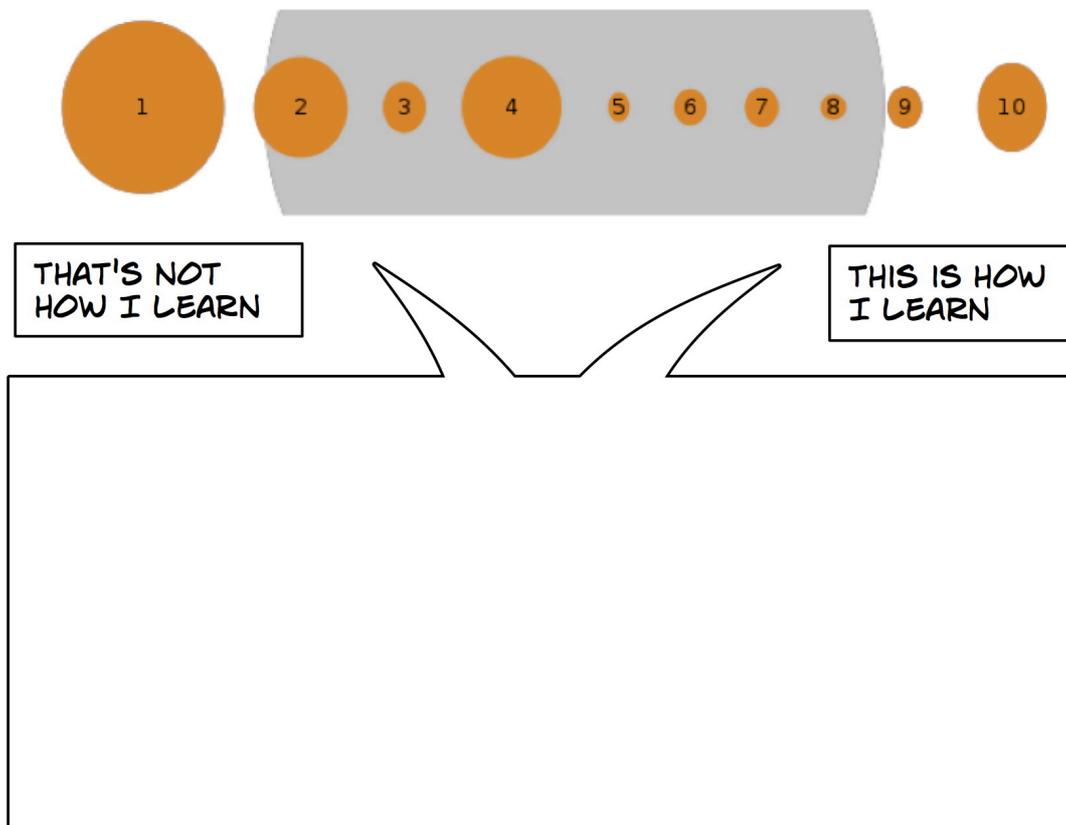


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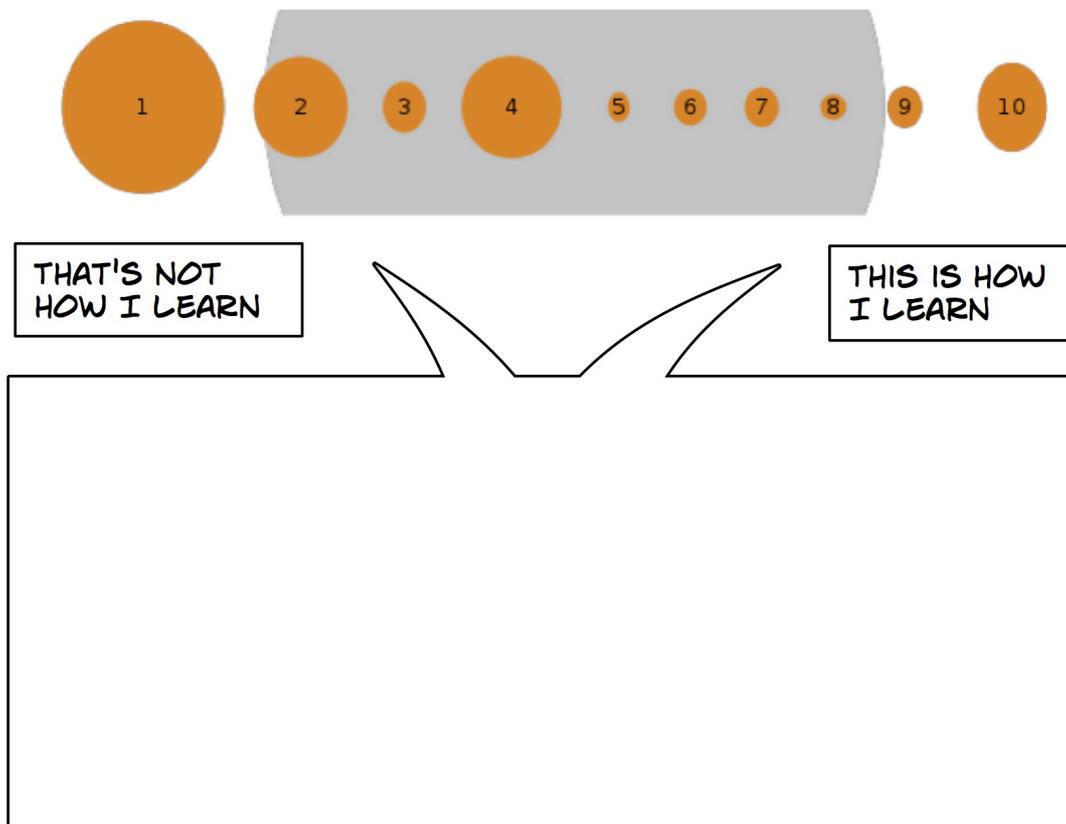
THIS IS HOW  
I LEARN

A large empty rectangular box for drawing or writing, positioned below the two speech bubbles.

You think in pictures instead of words. You think about things all at once instead of step-by-step. You have a wonderful imagination. You know more than others think you know. You solve problems in unusual ways. You know things, and you can't always explain how you know them.

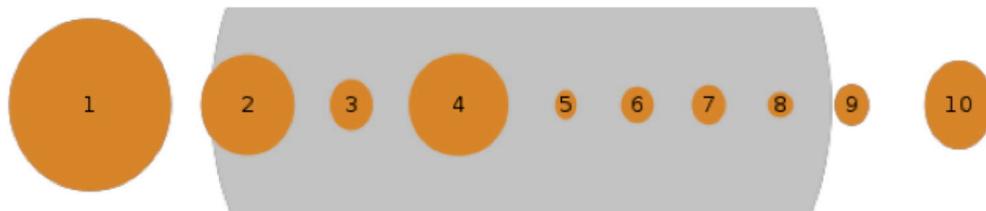


You may have trouble with spelling. You may have a hard time memorizing your multiplication facts. You may lose track of time. You are probably not well organized. But you can do some things that amaze others, like being able to see something upside-down or from different angles in your head. You are a natural builder or inventor. You may be an artist or a musician or a storyteller or a whiz with computers or someone who can take things apart and figure out how they work. You may be great with numbers or puzzles or science. You may be especially kind to others, knowing just how other people feel.



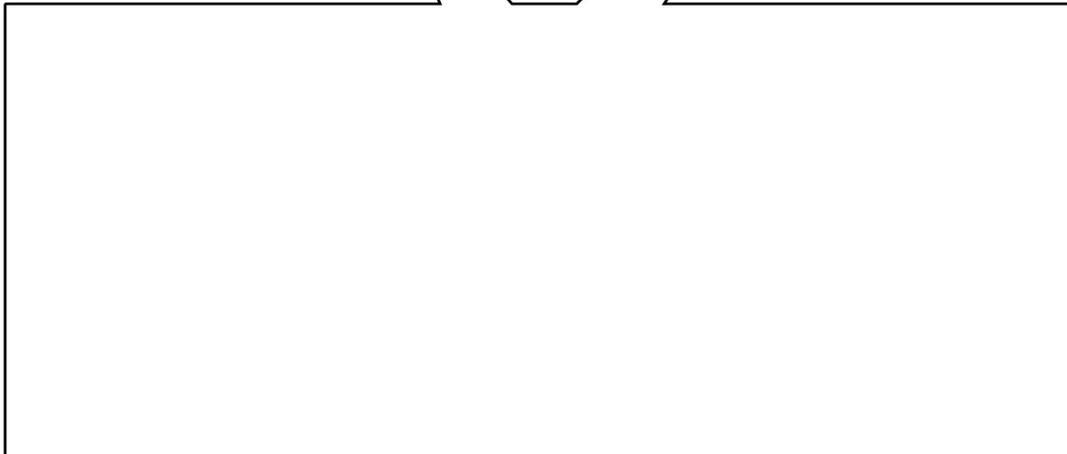
Here's a test of your secret powers. See if you can make people smile even people you don't know. Smile and see if they smile back.

You can change the world because you can create something new. You can change school because you can create new ways to do things. You can change anything by seeing it clearly in your mind. It takes time and practice, but picturing things really works.



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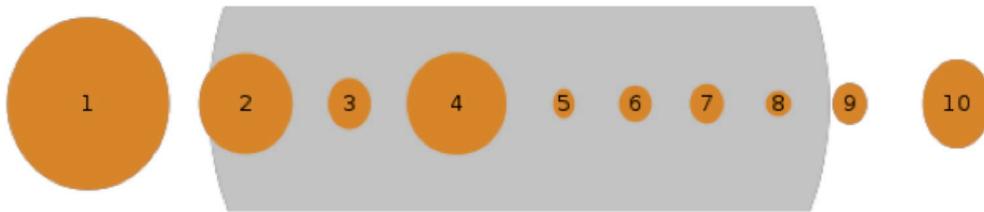
THIS IS HOW  
I LEARN



# Try this.

Close your eyes and picture yourself catching a ball. Can you slow the picture down in your mind? Can you see where the ball is going to land if you don't catch it? Can you put yourself in line with the ball? Can you see yourself catching the ball?

Ask someone to throw you a ball. Right before they throw the ball, close your eyes and picture the ball slowly coming toward you. Picture yourself catching it perfectly. Then have them throw it. Were you able to catch it? Keep doing this and you will become better and better at catching balls. You can use this trick to become better at anything you want to do!

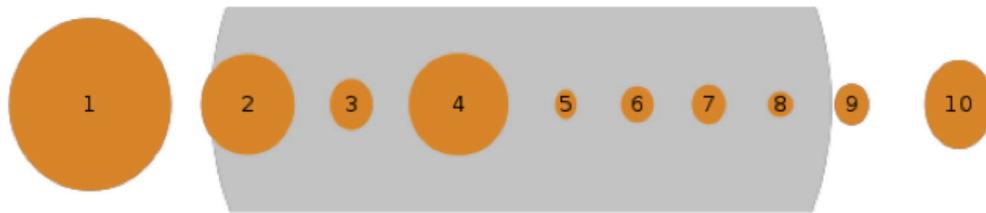


THAT'S NOT  
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Your secret power is the power to picture things in your mind. It can help you learn better. It can make school fun. It can help you be good at sports. It can help you make friends. It can help you solve problems, like getting your homework done.



THAT'S NOT  
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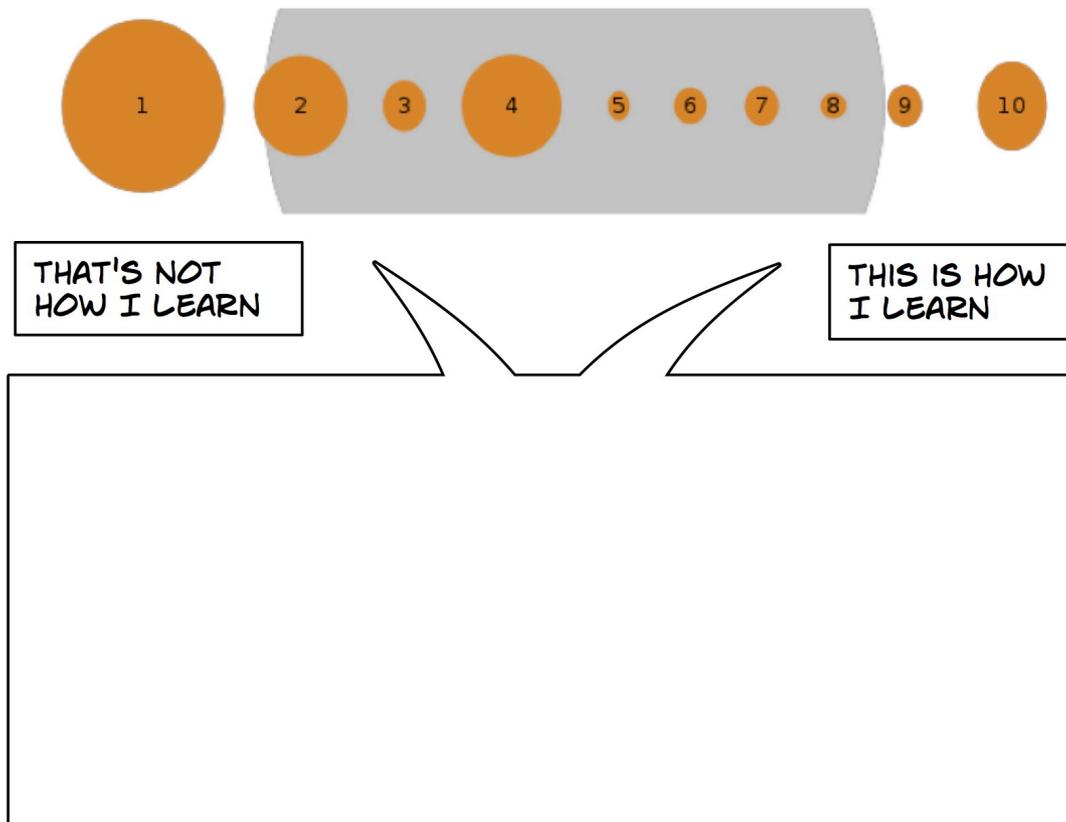
THIS IS HOW  
I LEARN

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for a student to write their response to the question 'THIS IS HOW I LEARN'.

Here are some ideas of how you can help yourself with schoolwork:

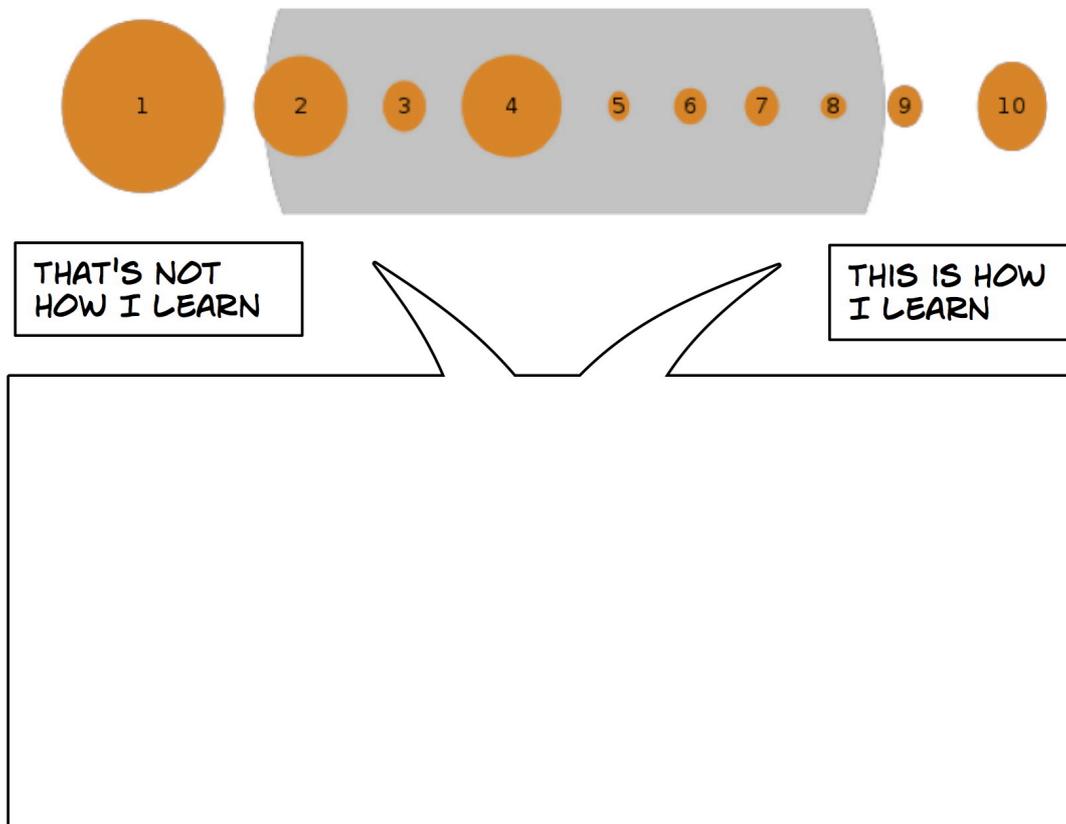
1. When the teacher teaches you a new lesson, close your eyes and picture it in your mind's eye.

2. When you are reading, close your eyes at each punctuation mark and picture what you are reading.



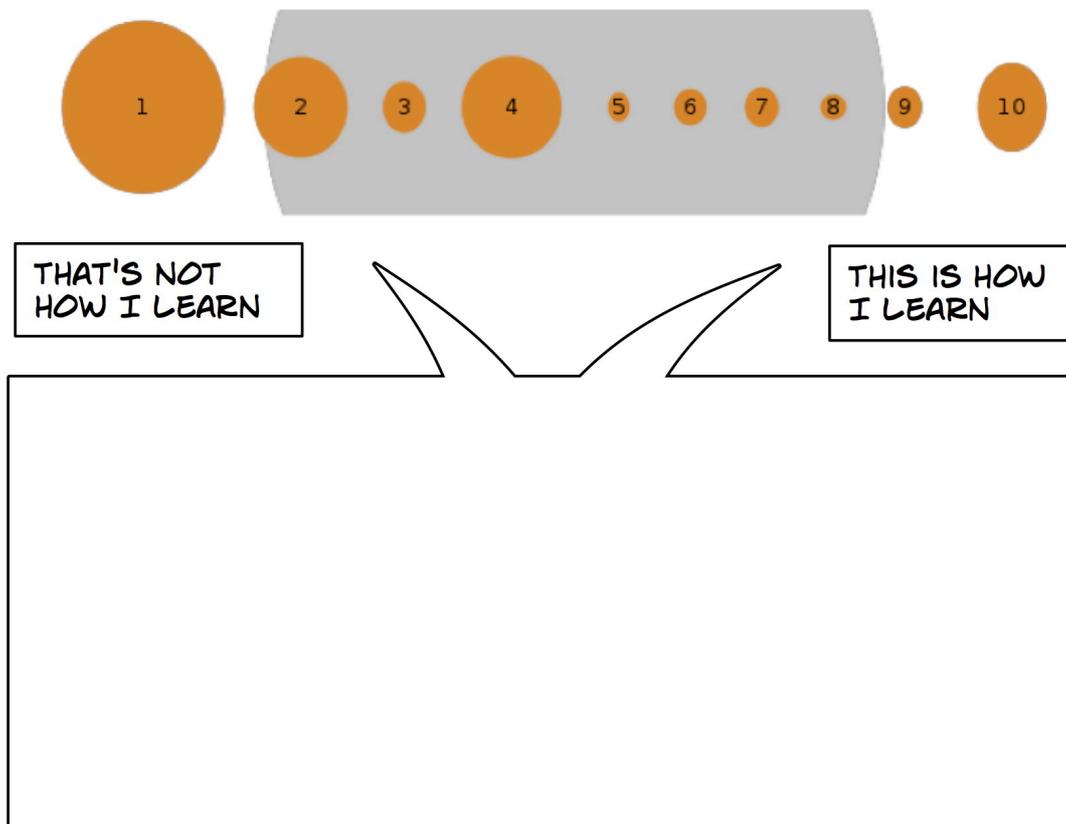
3. Picture spelling words in your mind. Make wild and crazy pictures out of the letters. Spell each spelling word backward by looking at your picture. If you can spell the word backward, you can spell it forward. You'll remember your picture.

4. When you have to remember something, see if you can put it to music.



5. Can you make videotapes in your mind of concepts you are learning at school? Can you speed up the videotape? Can you slow it down and play it in slow motion? Can you zoom in on some part of it? Can you freeze one frame and study it closely? Can you rewind your tape, and do an instant replay of one part?

6. Use your imagination to make a lesson or an assignment more interesting. Can you create a story about it? Can you draw a picture of it? Can you make something three-dimensional to represent the concept? Can you make a game out of it?



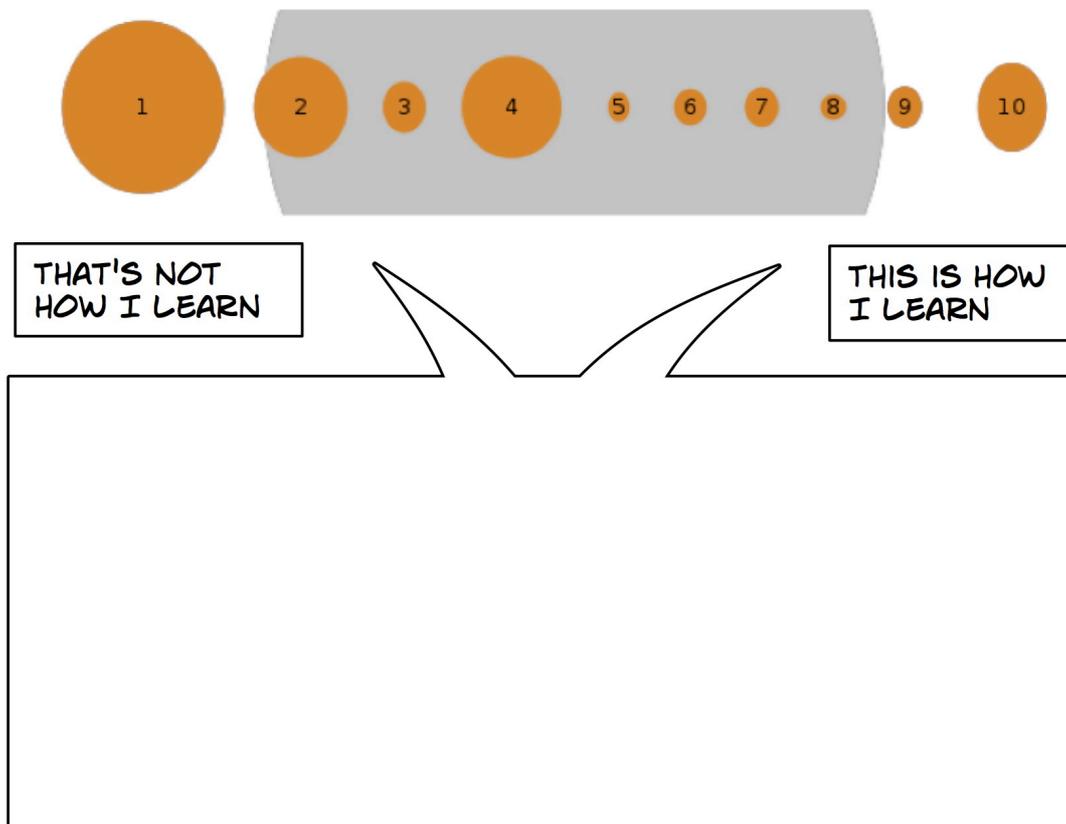
7. Can you relate what you are learning to something you love?

8. Colour-code ideas you are trying to learn with a highlighter. Are some ideas easier to remember in blue? Red? Purple?

9. Can you learn to use a keyboard and type your assignments?

10. Create a fantasy in your imagination about what you are learning.

It makes the subject more fun, and helps you remember the material better.

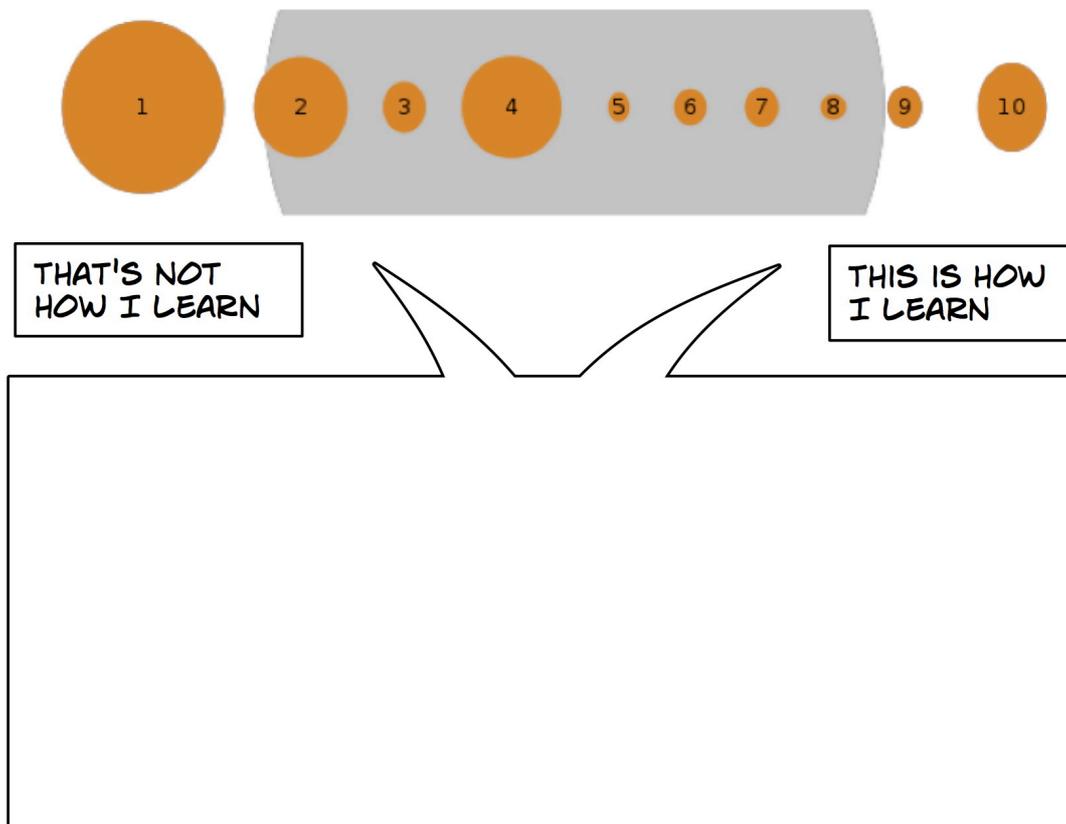


11. If you have trouble lining up numbers when you add or subtract them, try using graph paper, or turn lined paper sideways.

12. If you have trouble creating outlines for papers, use the computer program, Inspiration, (or Kidspiration) to help you organize your ideas visually.

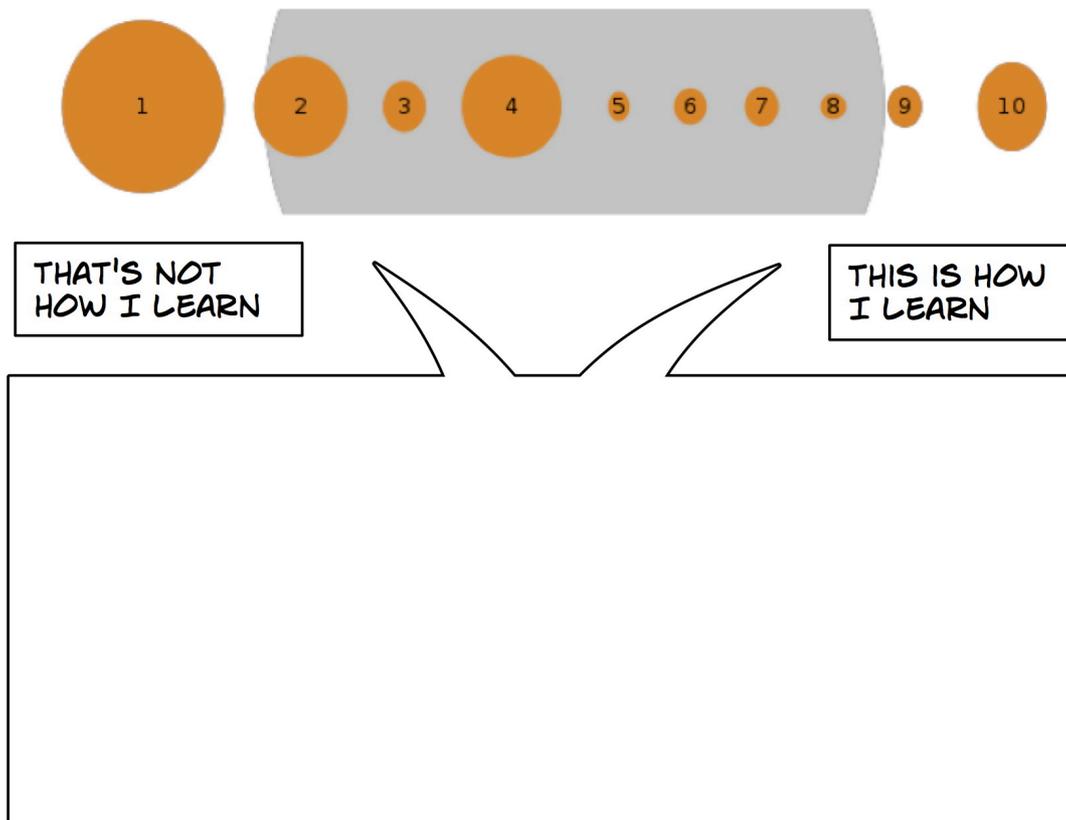
13. If you have trouble finishing tests during class time, ask your teacher for more time.

14. If you keep forgetting your books, ask to borrow a second set to use at home.

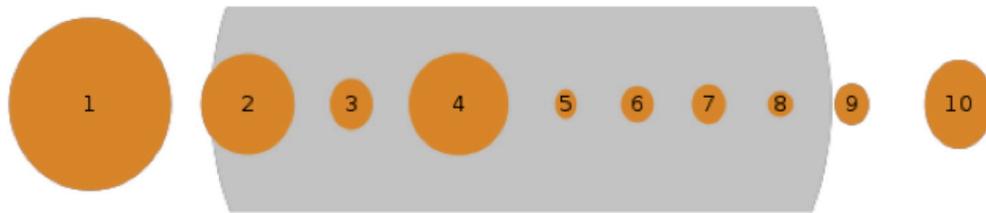


15. Write down your assignments in a planning book, so that you know when they are due. If you have trouble understanding an assignment, ask your teacher.

16. If you have trouble completing an assignment, come up with a creative way to demonstrate your understanding of the material in another way. Can you make a Power Point slide show for the class instead of writing a paper? Can you create a diorama or some other three-dimensional project?

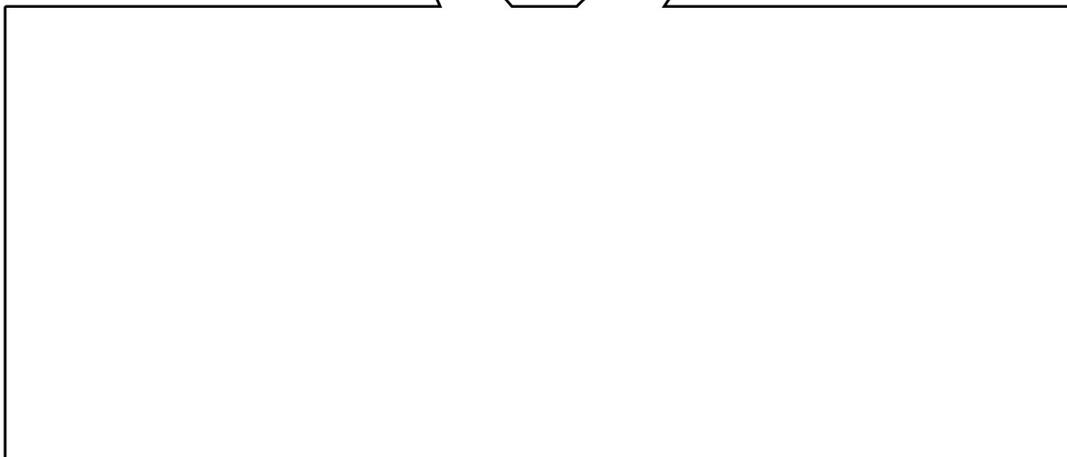


Now do you see what I mean by your special power? You can use this power to be successful in school, even though school may not be your favourite place. You can use this special power to help you with any challenge you face! Then, if you can find a way to make learning fun, and make it easier for you to learn, you'll have found a way to reach your dreams and goals in life.



THAT'S NOT  
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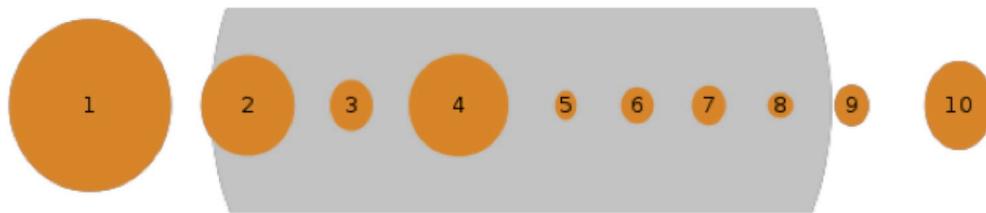


# About your learning style

Do you think mainly in pictures instead of in words? Do you know things without being able to explain how or why? Do you solve problems in unusual ways? Do you have a vivid imagination?

Do you remember what you see and forget what you hear? Are you terrible at spelling? Can you visualize objects from different perspectives?

Are you organizationally impaired? Do you often lose track of time? Would you rather read a map than follow verbal directions?



THAT'S NOT  
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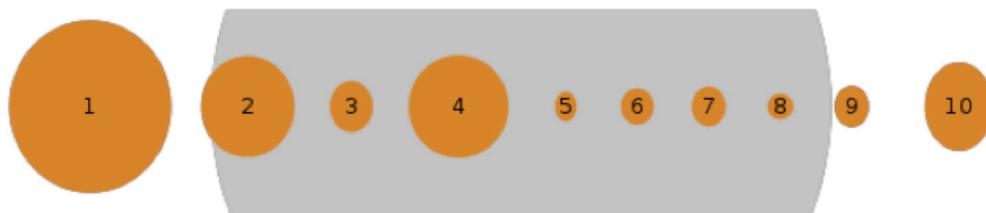
Do you remember how to get to places you visited only once? Is your handwriting difficult for others to read? Can you feel what others are feeling? Are you musically, artistically, or mechanically inclined?

Do you know more than others think you know?

Do you hate speaking in front of a group?

Did you feel smarter as you got older? Are you addicted to your computer?

If you answered yes to 10 of the above questions, you are very likely to be a visual-spatial learner.



THAT'S NOT  
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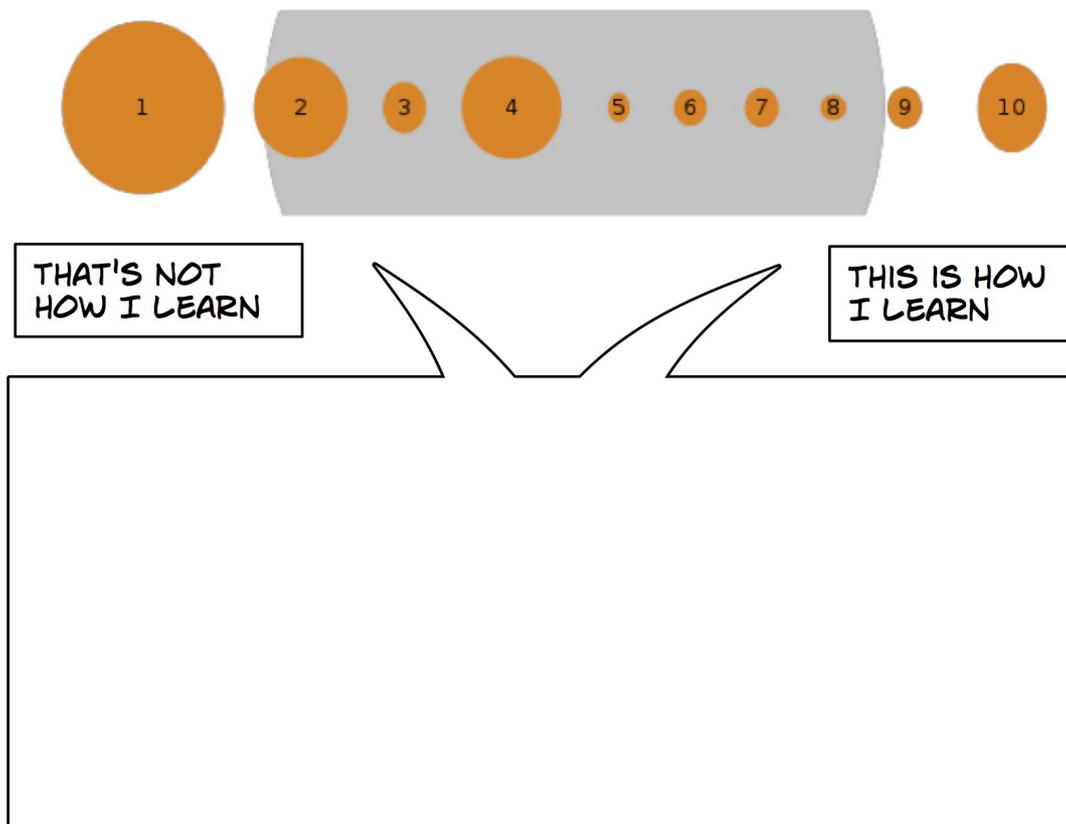
THIS IS HOW  
I LEARN

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for a drawing or written response. It is positioned below two speech bubbles that point towards it.

# The Visual-Spatial Learner

I hate speaking in front of a group.

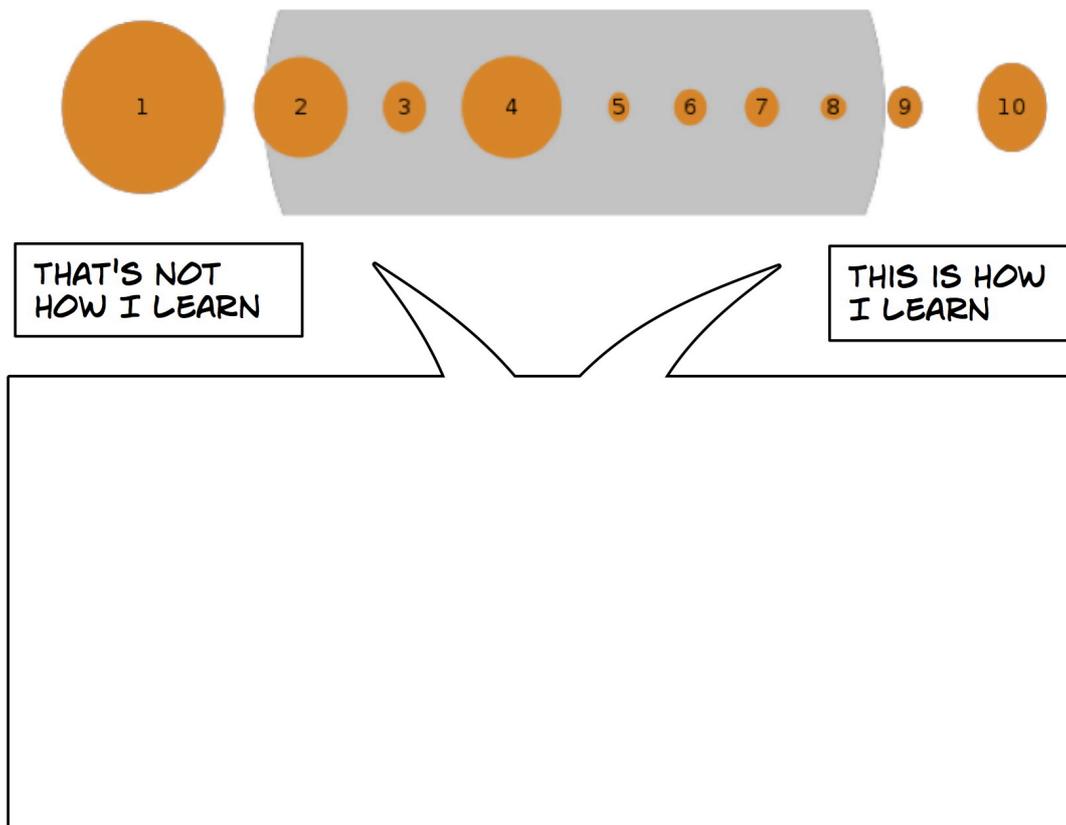
I think mainly in pictures instead of words. I am good at spelling (not). I often lose track of time. I know more than others think I know. I don't do well with tests with time limits. I have neat handwriting (not). I have a wild imagination. I like to take things apart to find out how they work. I hate writing assignments. I solve problems in unusual ways.



It's much easier for me to tell you about things than to write them down. I have a hard time explaining how I came up with my answers.

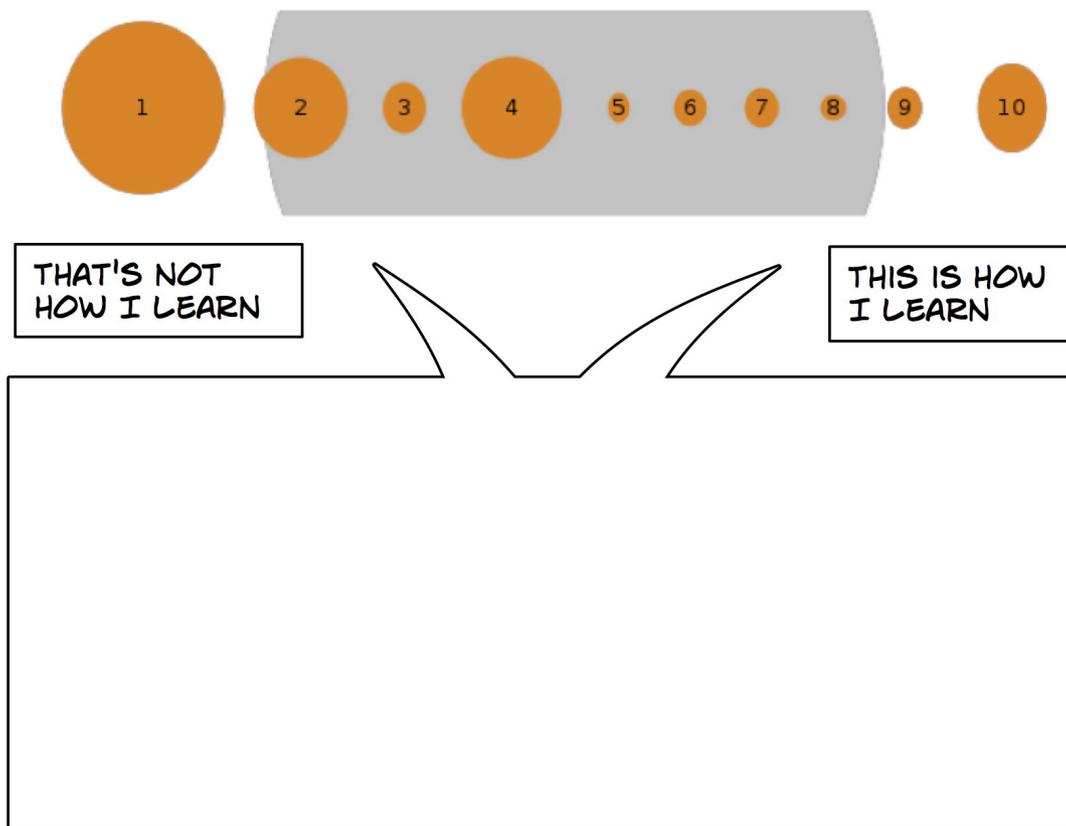
I am well organized (not).

It was easy for me to memorize my maths facts (not).

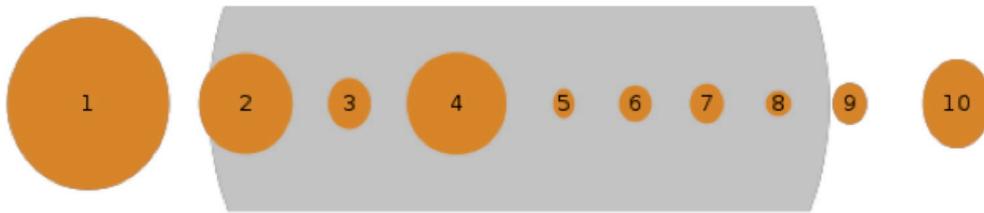


# Success in school still depends upon:

- Following directions
- Turning in assigned work on time
- Memorization of facts
- Fast recall
- Showing steps of work
- Neat, legible handwriting
- Accurate spelling
- Punctuality
- Good organization; tidiness

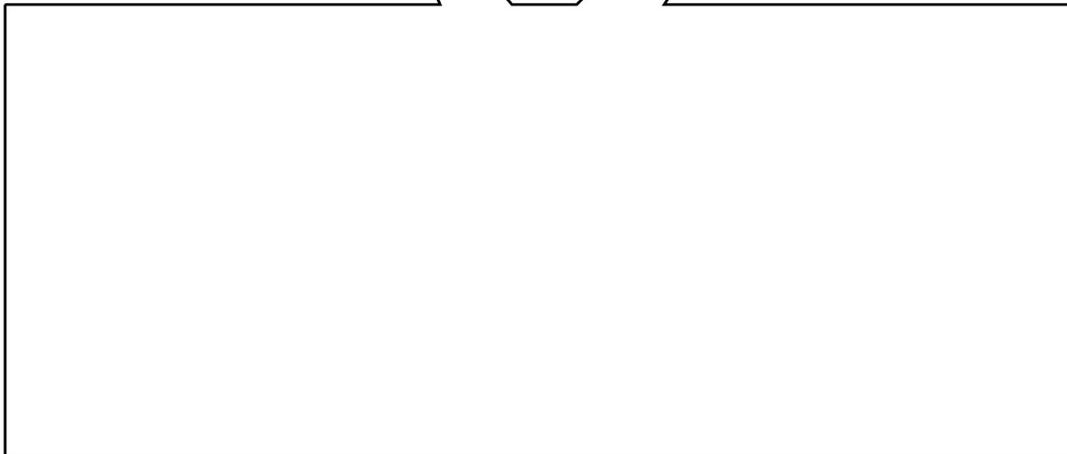


*I think in pictures, not words, and usually have great trouble expressing myself in words. I need time to translate my pictures into words. My handwriting is often hard to read and my spelling is idiosyncratic.*

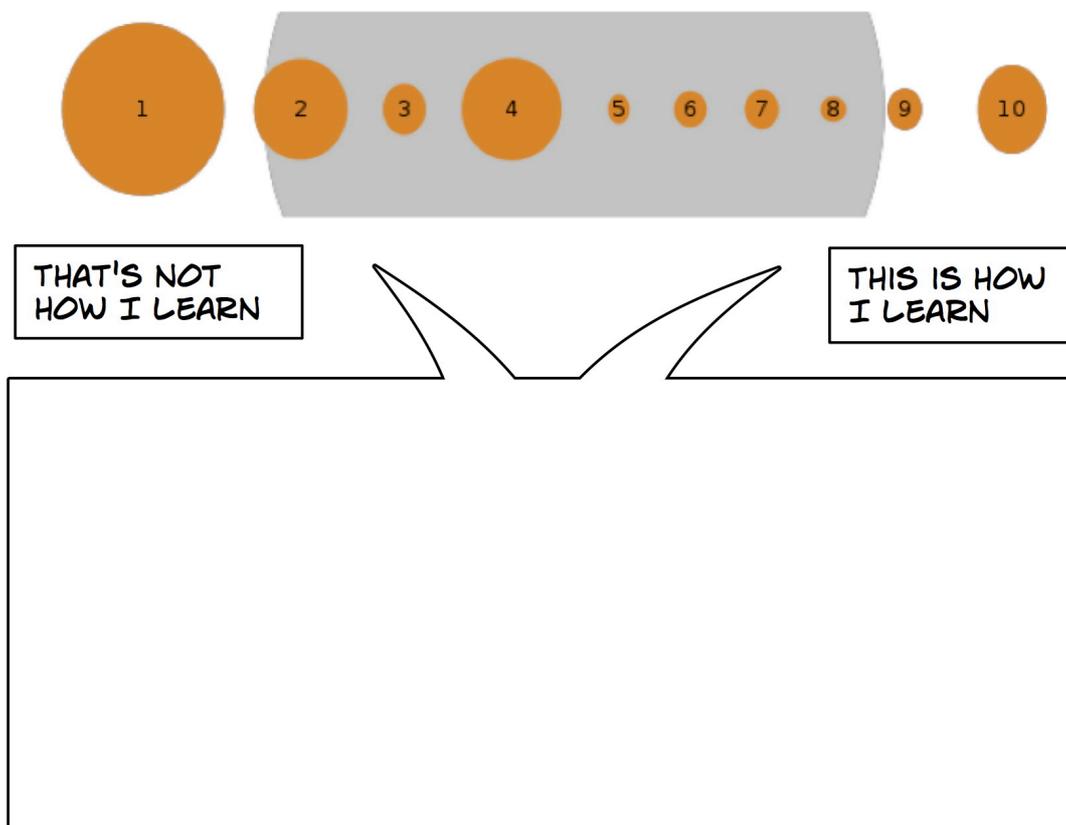


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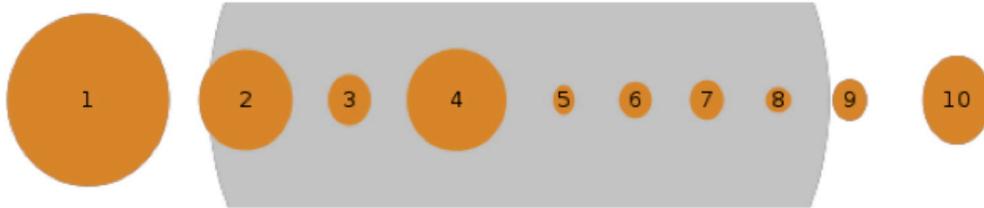
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*I am getting smarter as I get older: I am a late bloomer. I needed the most support during primary school where the focus was often on rote learning and sequential instruction. I am better equipped to deal with the greater cognitive demands of high school than the simple, sequential learning of the earlier grades.*

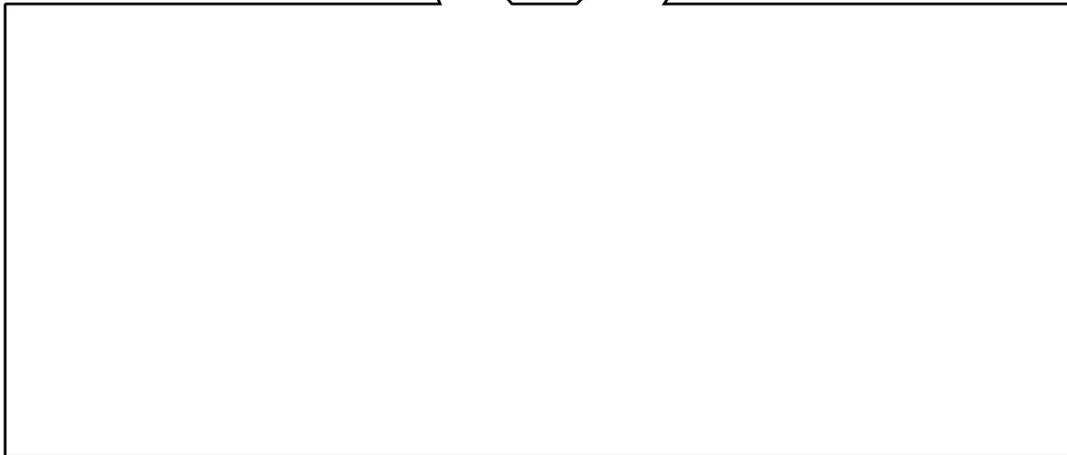


*I excel at puzzles, mazes, map reading, construction, art, science, music, mechanics, computers, problem solving, creativity, and empathy.*

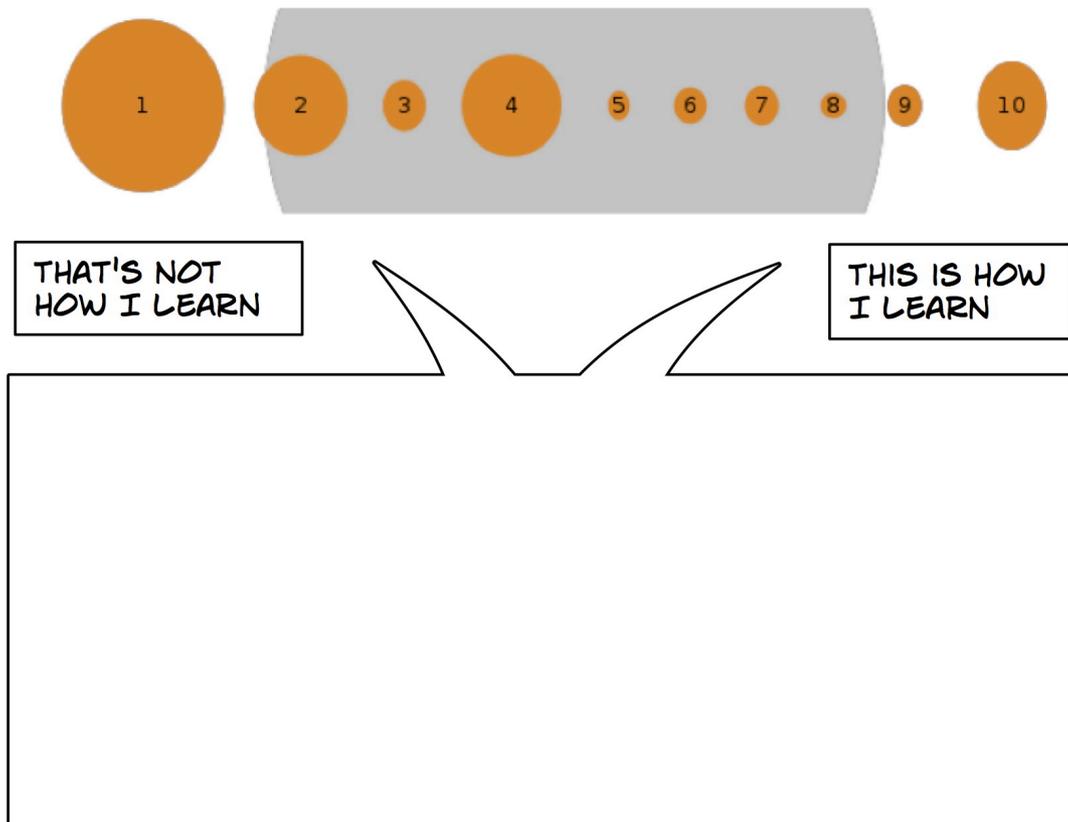


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I panic the minute I know I am being timed and literally can't think straight. I can't access my knowledge and I can't find the words. I need a less pressured learning environment.



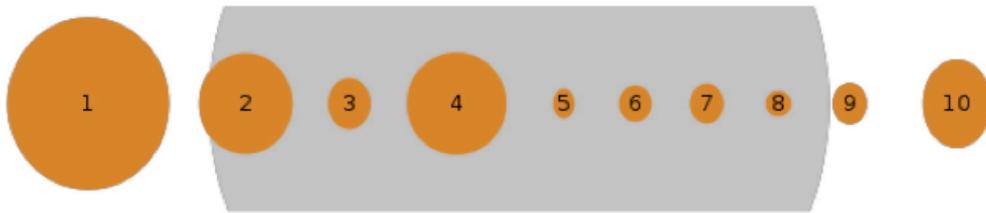
*I learn best when:*

*No timed tests*

*More time for in-class assignments*

*Being allowed to do assignments on a keyboard*

*Being allowed to complete assignments at home*

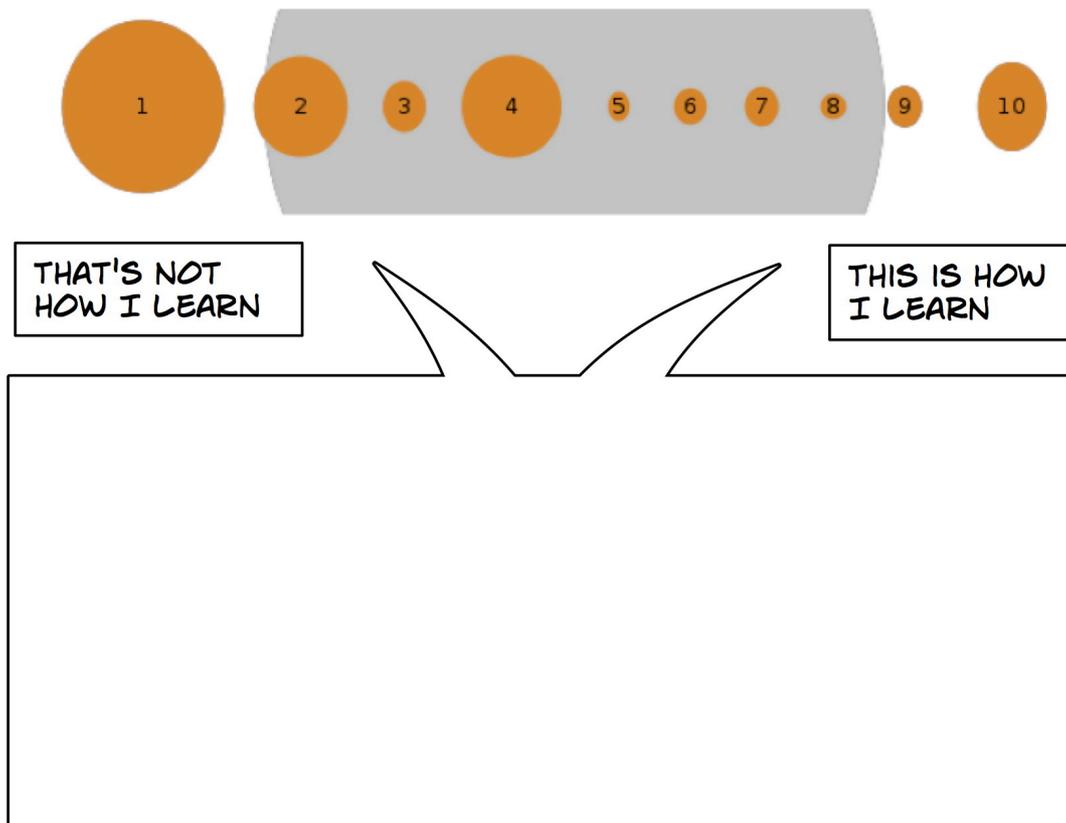


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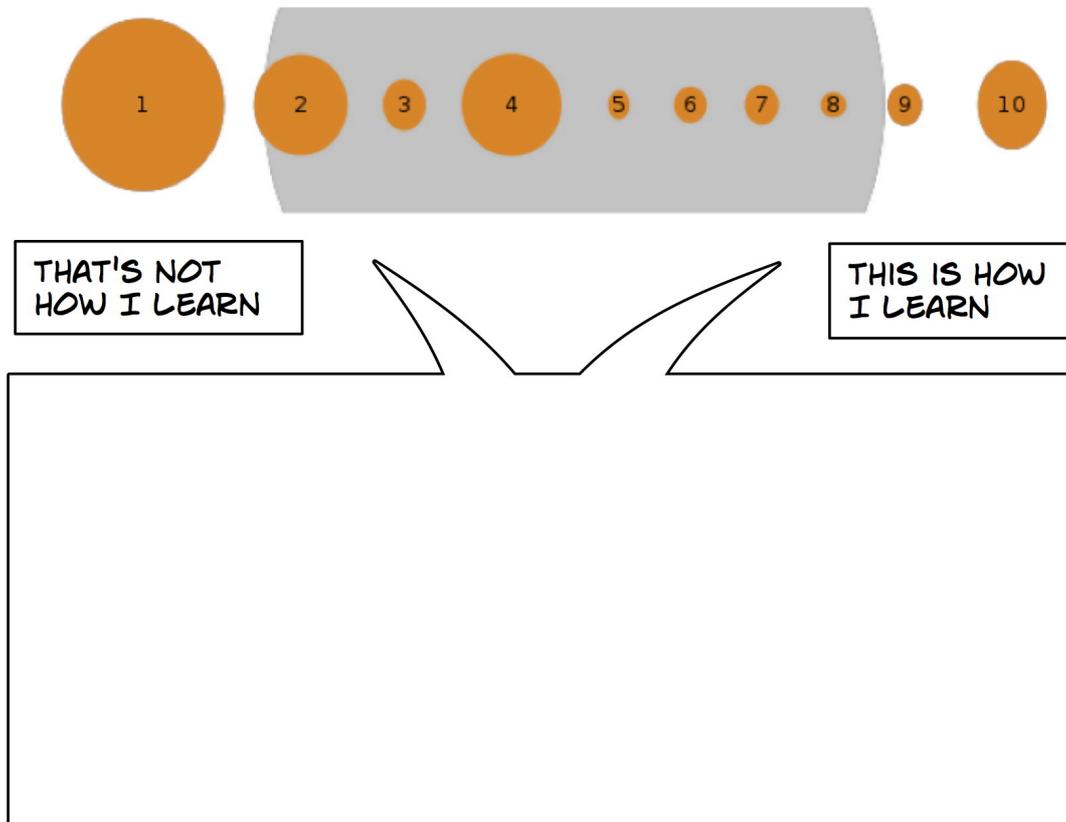
THIS IS HOW  
I LEARN

A large empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for a student to write their response.

I started school by screaming for Mummy not to leave me. Then I stood on the side and watched the others, without talking with anyone. When I finally mustered up enough courage to enter into the other children's activities, I tried to redesign everything to fit my own vision of the way things should be. I was seen either as "bossy" or "weird" and was rejected by the others. Since I was supersensitive, I withdrew into my own world after this type of rejection.



Instead of writing a book report I want the teacher to allow me to construct a diorama depicting the conflict or climax of the story? What about making a mini-film of the key events? Or, perhaps a storyboard or cartoon book? Can I be allowed to write and play a piece of music based on the book? If the book was a period piece, could I be granted permission to design costumed paper dolls to recreate the key scenes?

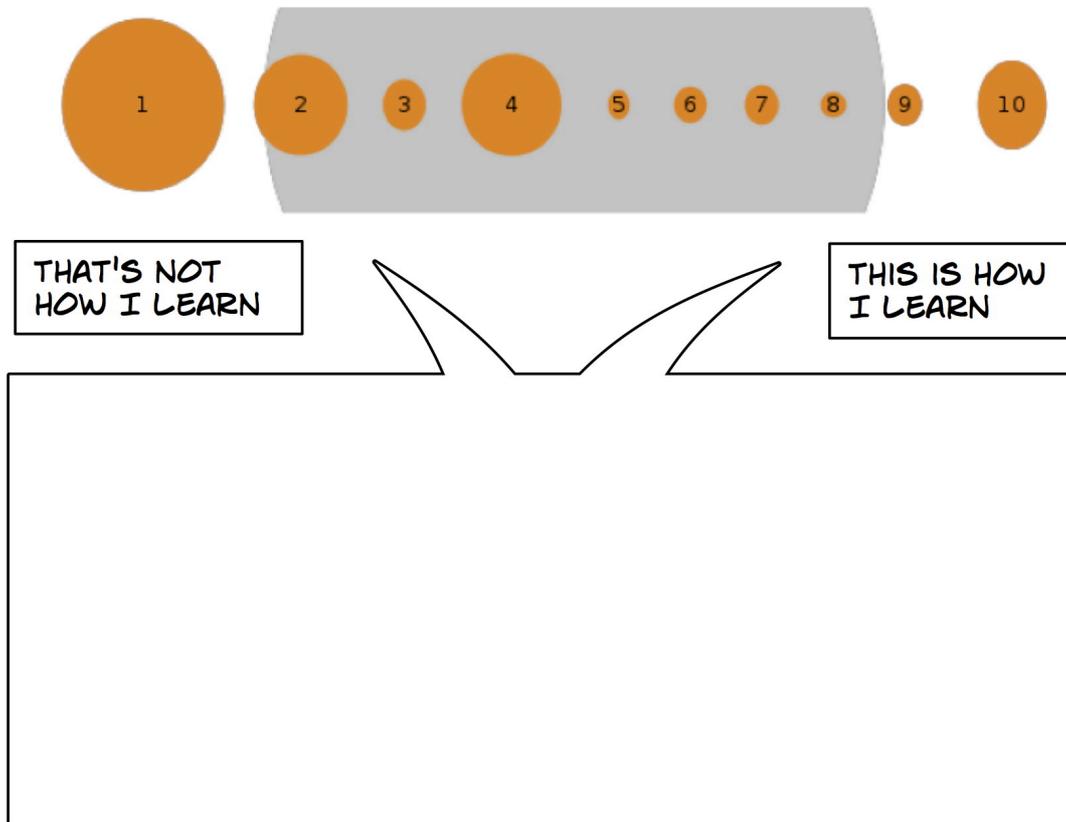


*I learn better when the teacher:*

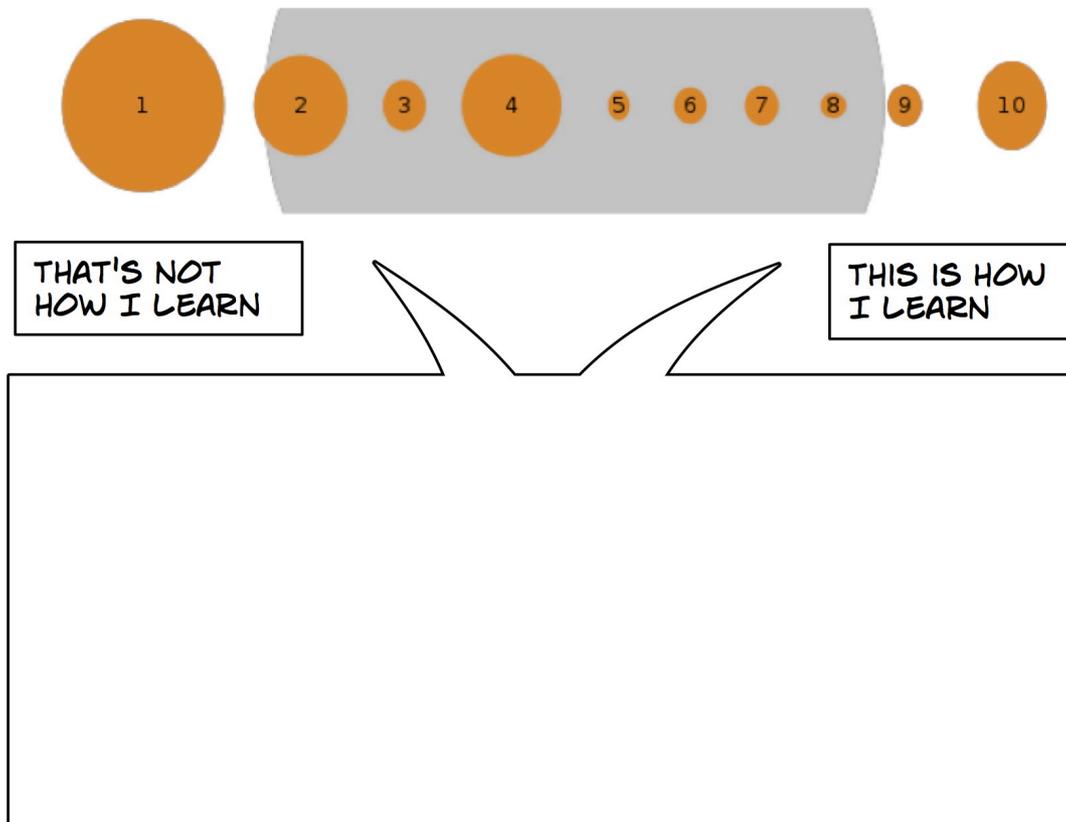
*Uses visual aids, such as overhead projectors, and visual imagery in lectures.*

*Uses manipulative materials to allow hands-on experience.*

*Uses a sight approach to reading rather than phonics.*

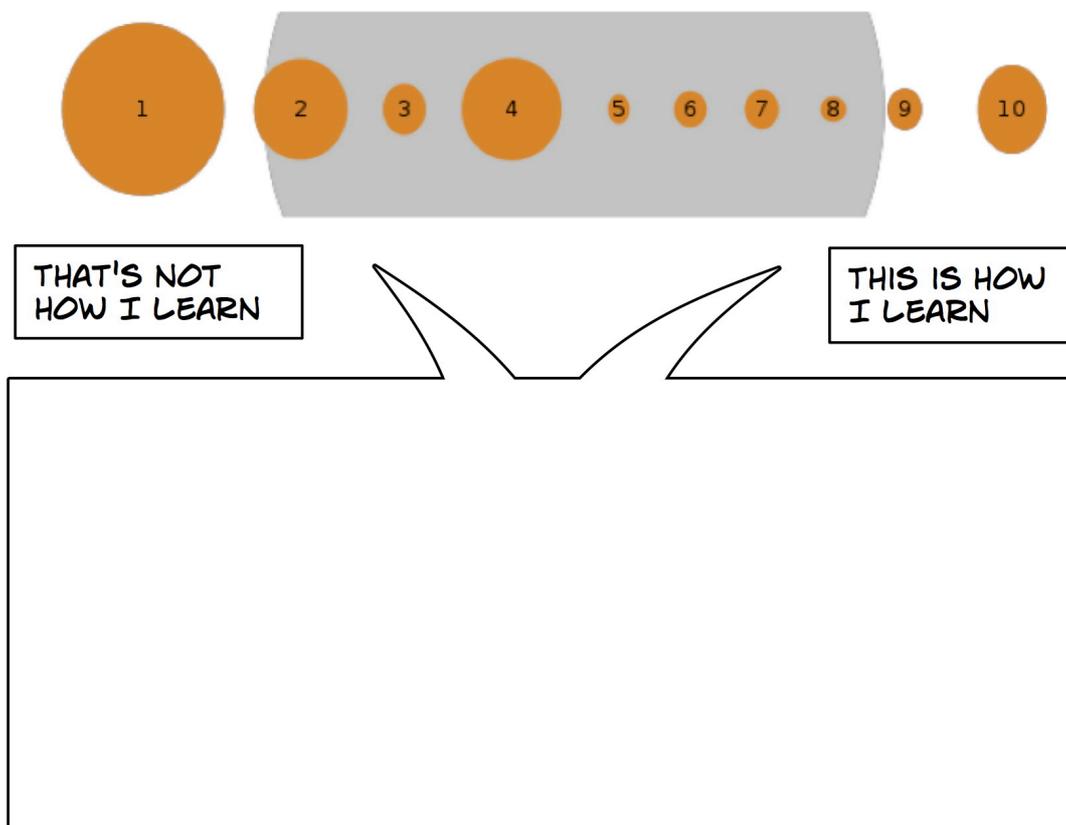


*I am more attentive if I understand the goals of instruction. I am more cooperative at home and at school if I am allowed some input into the decision-making process and some legitimate choices.*



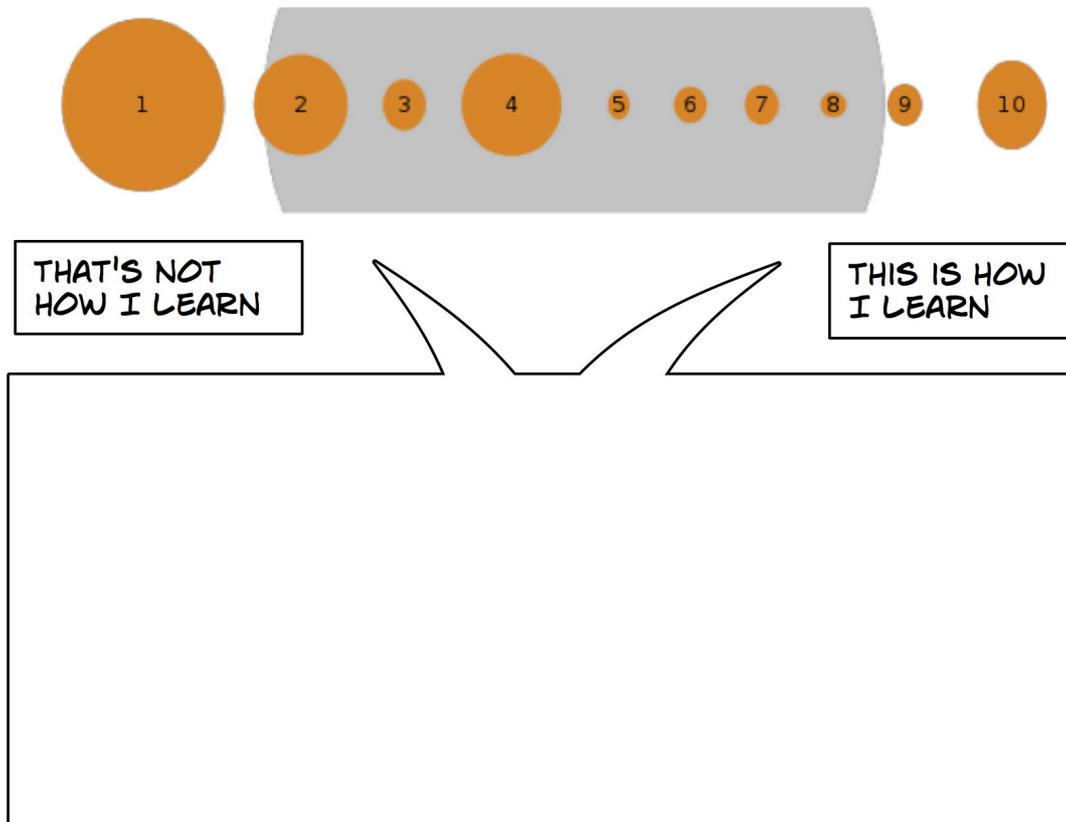
Some ideas for my teachers:

- Touch my shoulder to get my attention.
- Get eye contact before talking to me.
- Limit the number of directions you give me at one time.
- Show me, don't tell me. For me, a picture is worth a thousand words.



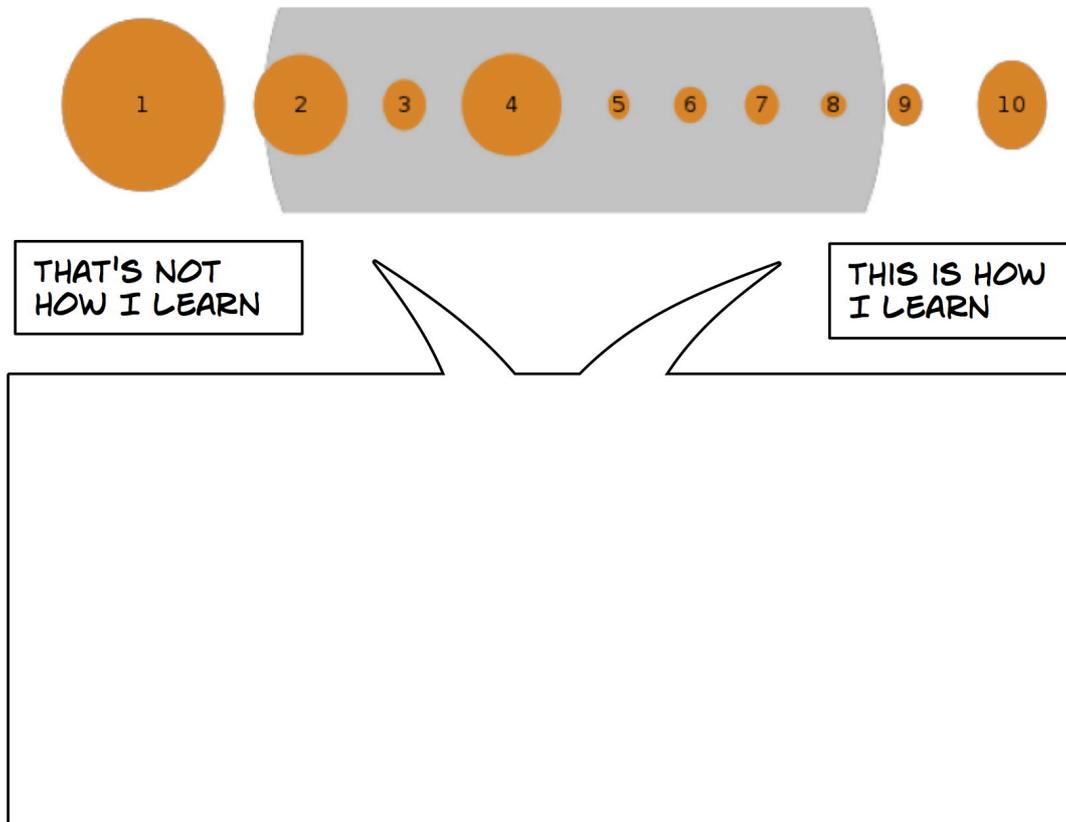
Some ideas for my teachers:

- Let me observe others before attempting new tasks. I learn by watching.
- Use visualisation techniques.
- Teach me to use computers and let me do assignments with the assistance of a word processor.
- Shorten written assignments. Grade on ideas, not mechanics.



Some ideas for my teachers:

- Avoid timed tests. If I must take them, let me compete against my own past record, rather than with other children.
- Buy a Bed Speller's Dictionary (organized by misspellings) and allow me to look up words.
- Give me advanced work even when I haven't mastered simple sequential tasks.

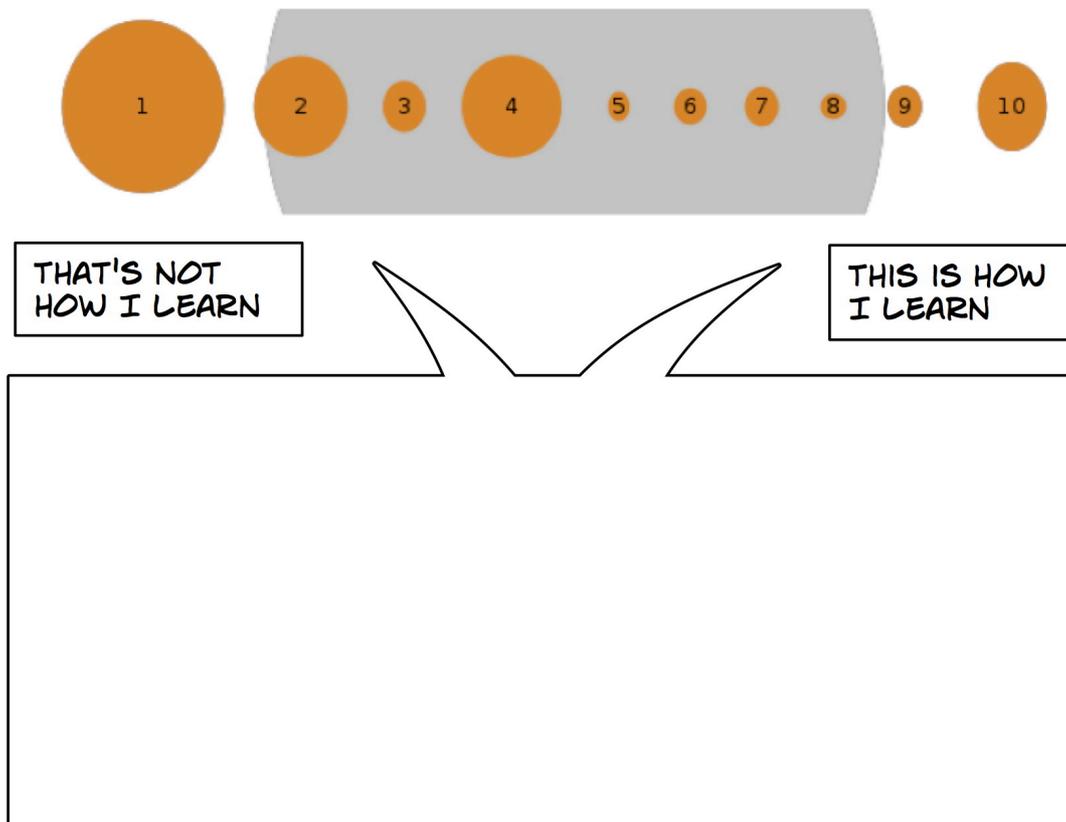


Brain connections that are in existence when a child is born contribute to only one third of intelligence.

The environment and learned information are critical in shaping brain structure, behaviour and intelligence.

Much of what happens is not fixed by genes or inheritance. Anyone can learn at any time of their life. Where learning is concerned – teachers have a major contribution to make to an individual's growth and development intellectually.

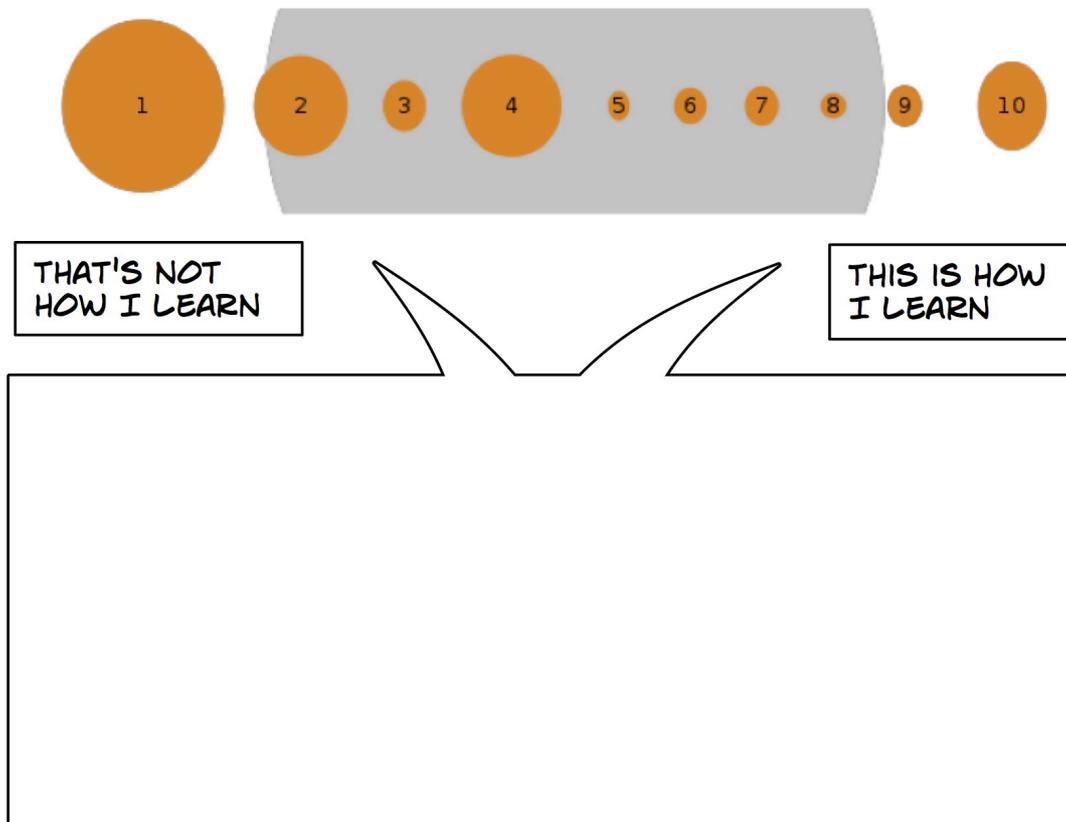
The quality of learning cannot be better than the quality of your teaching.



The brain is plastic. It constantly grows and changes in response to the environment and what you experience. Neuroscientists call this plasticity.

No two brains are the same.

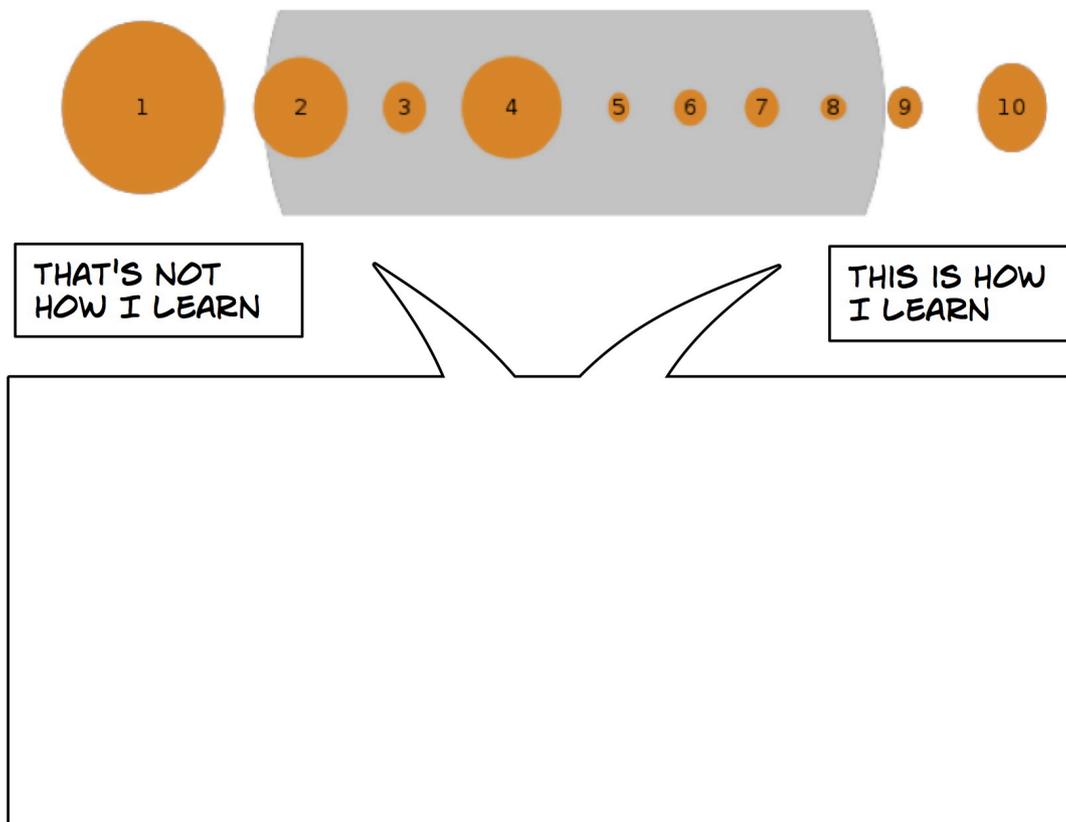
The brain grows and develops during a whole lifetime.



## The conscious brain

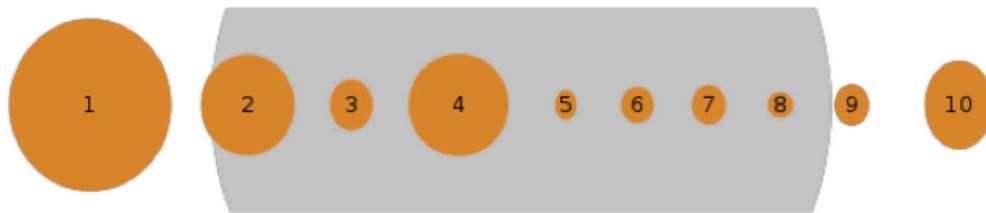
Your forebrain is that part of the brain that you will associate with the real you. It is operating when you are making choices and make decisions about what you like and hate, what food you will eat and what you think is the correct answer to a question.

This part of the brain is only as good as what information it is fed.



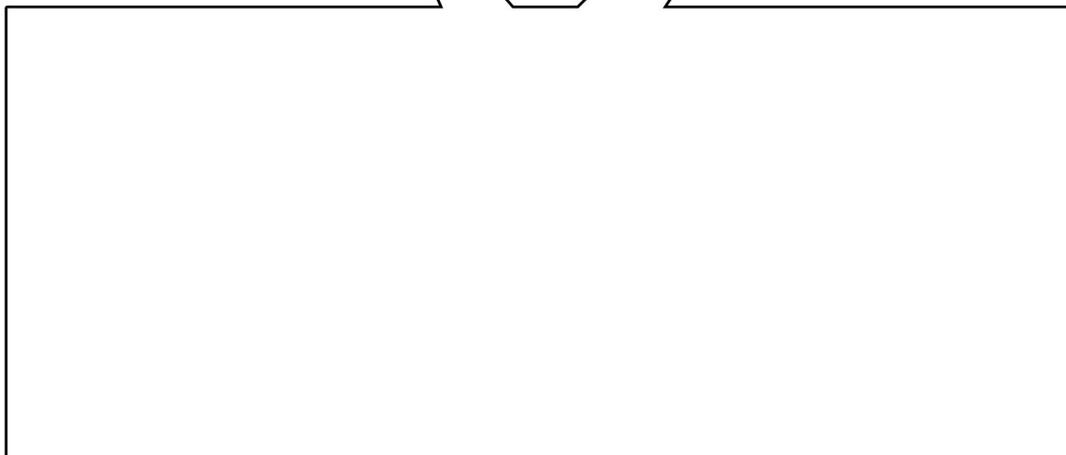
The brain responds strongly to learning opportunities that:

- Involve new learning experiences e.g. going outside to learn something
- Arouse their emotional response
- Getting to handle things associated with learning (tactile children respond to this approach)
- Seeing and hearing ideas simultaneously
- Answering open ended questions that challenge new thought and applying existing knowledge

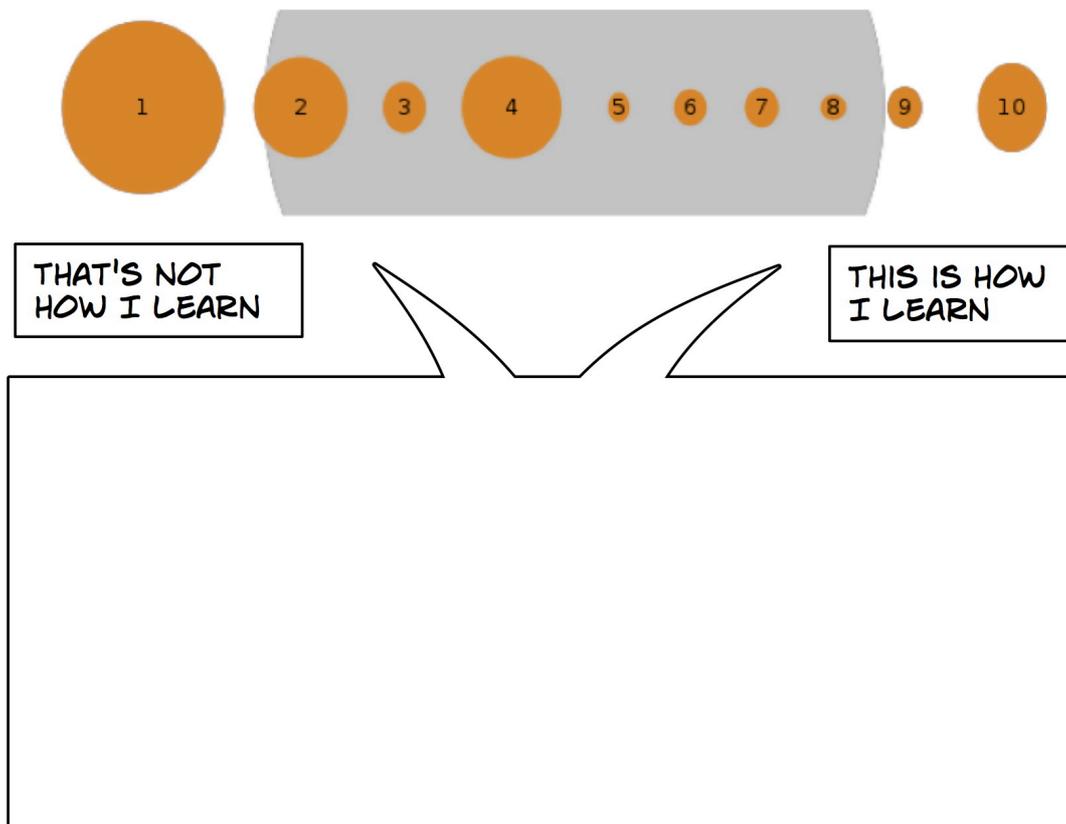


THAT'S NOT  
HOW I LEARN

THIS IS HOW  
I LEARN

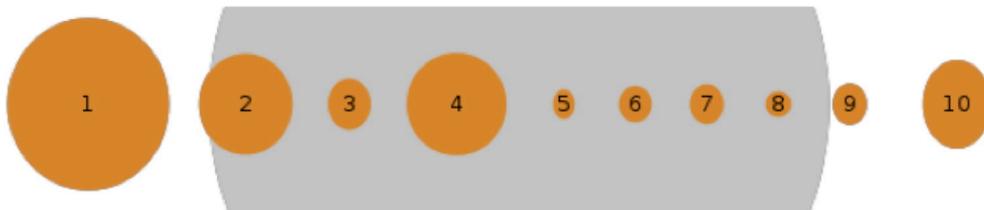


- Being challenged by quizzes encourages confidence in learnt concepts and enhances memory skills.
- Involve a sense of fun and connection to the teacher and fellow students.
- Require thinking or creating imaginary pictures of an activity.



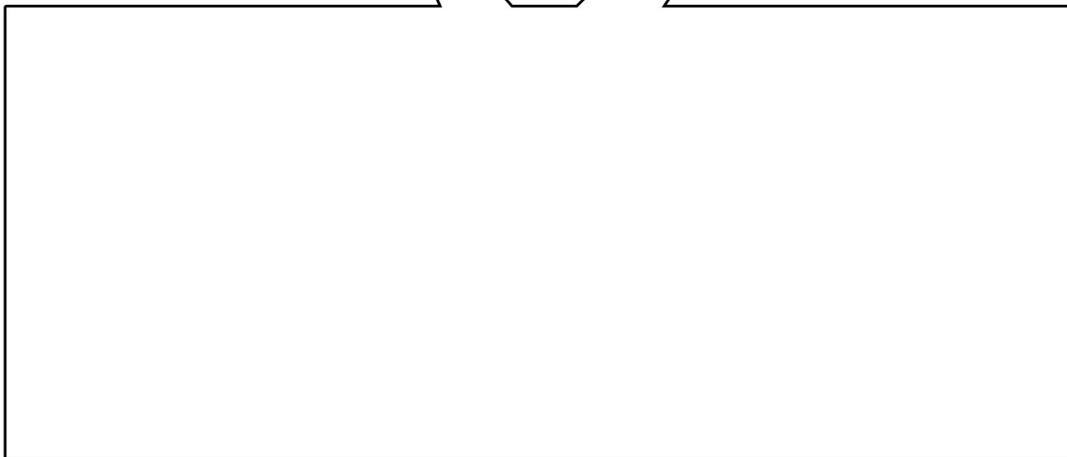
To keep my attention teachers need to:

- Set clear tasks where the pupil knows exactly what to do.
- Keep distractions to a minimum.
- Give indications of how long I will need to work on a task.
- Give me breaks if necessary.



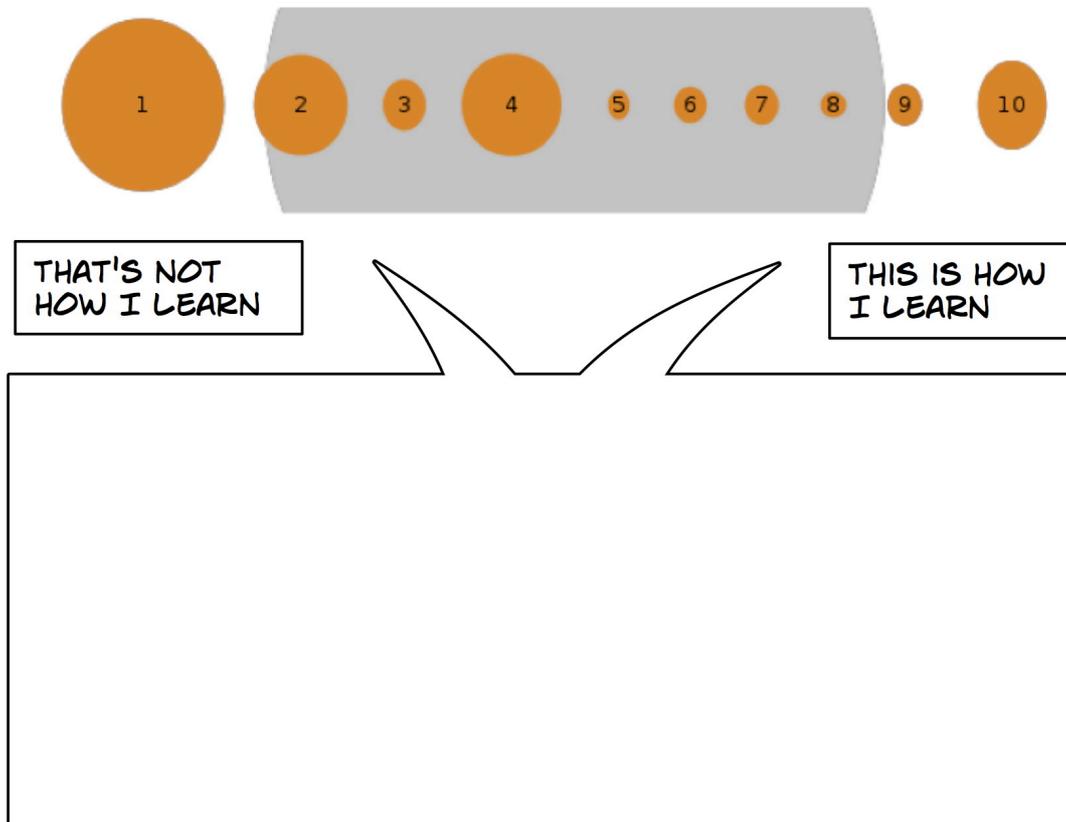
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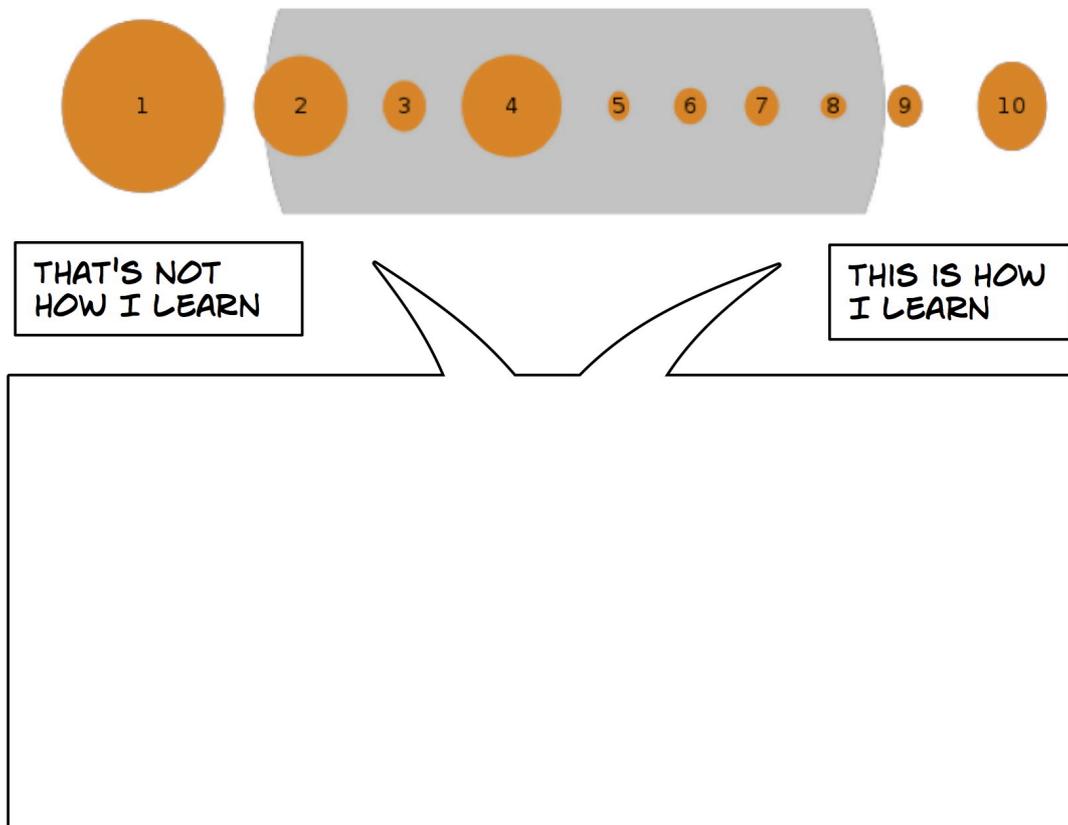
I like it when the teacher:

- Introduces a fun activity or a quiz to break the tension of the learning environment.
- Gets me to move around the classroom or introduces a music break.
- Gets me to write out revision cards and question others after swapping cards.



Visual learners are watchers.

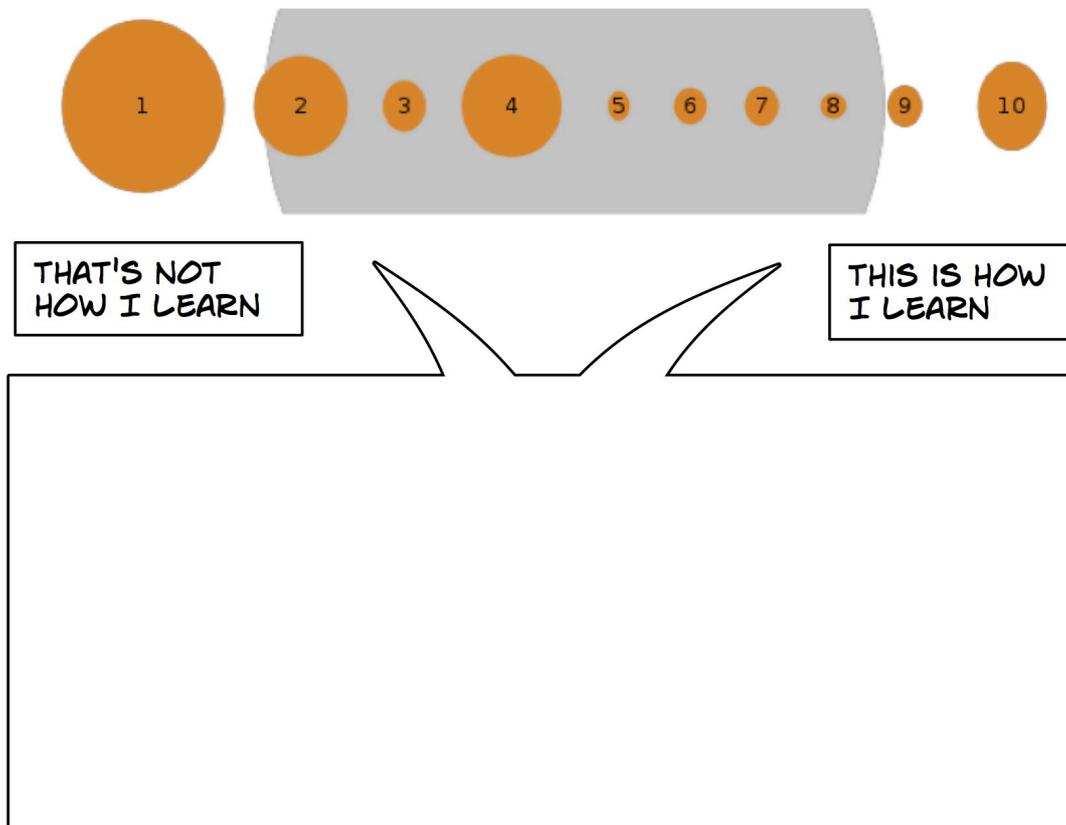
As babies, they are often drawn to lights, colors, and movement. They revel in colourful toys and piles of picture books. Visual learners enjoy and learn easily from pictures, handouts, videos, and films. In school, they can learn science principles by watching a science experiment rather than having to conduct the experiment themselves.



*Auditory learners are listeners.*

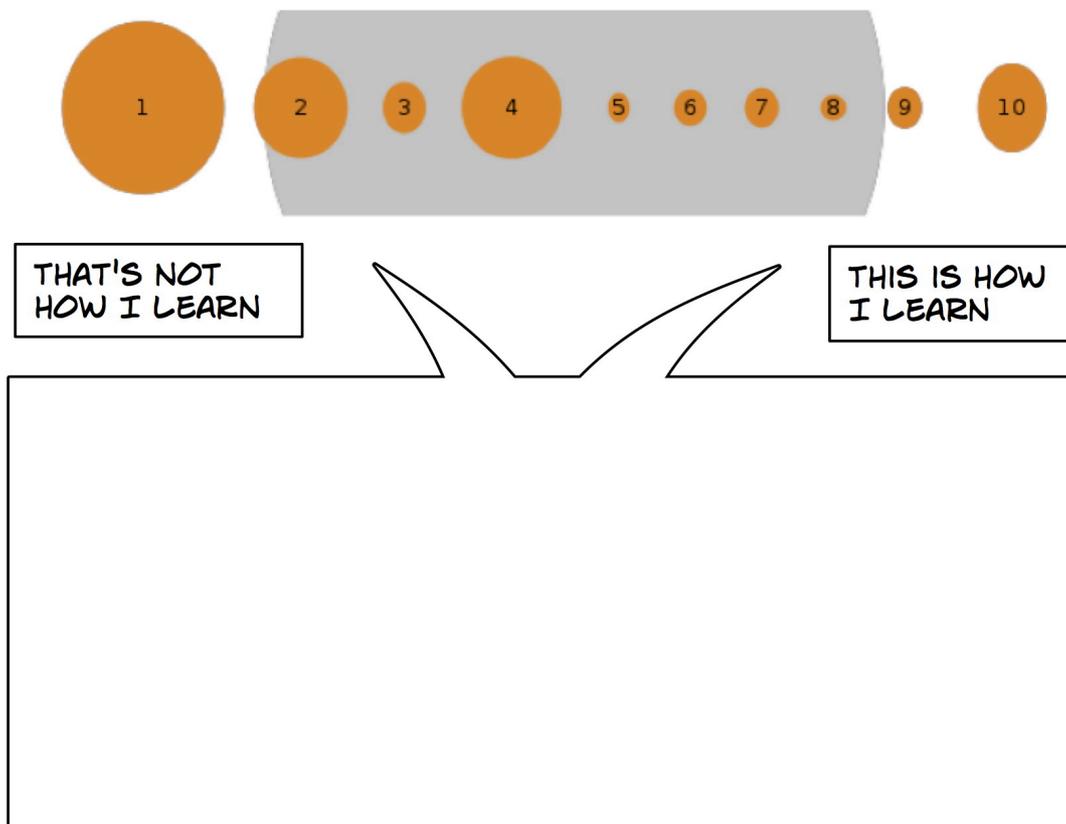
*They learn to talk early and, as toddlers, enjoy listening to tapes and playing musical instruments.*

*Auditory learners are talkative. They like to read aloud, recall commercials word for word, and do tongue twisters. In school, they memorize maths facts much more easily in a song or poem than from flash cards.*



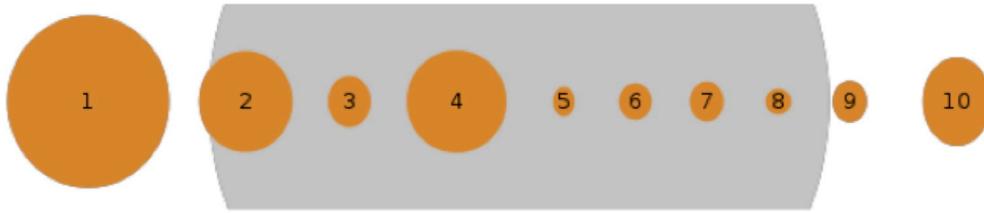
*Kinesthetic learners are hands-on types.*

*Kids who love taking things apart to see how they work are kinesthetic learners. As babies, kinesthetic learners are in constant motion, their movements are well coordinated, and they are anxious to crawl and walk as quickly as possible. In a classroom, kinesthetic learners can be fidgety. They'll often be the first to volunteer to do something —anything—active. They want to do an experiment not watch it or read about it.*



## Learning styles - Visual

- 1 I can remember some things better if I write them down.
- 2 I am able to visualize/imagine (see) pictures of what I read or am being told, in my head.
- 3 I am able to take lots of notes on what I read and what I hear.
- 4 It helps me to understand what is being said if I look at the person who is speaking.
- 5 It becomes hard for me to understand if I don't look at the person who is speaking.
- 6 It is easier for me to get work done in a quiet place.
- 7 It is easy for me to understand maps, charts and graphics.
- 8 When I am concentrating on reading/writing, the radio/TV distracts me.
- 9 When I try to remember something, I can see the page in my mind.
- 10 I cannot remember a joke long enough to tell it later.
- 11 When I am trying to remember something new - a telephone number for example - it helps me to form a picture of it in my head.
- 12 When I get a great idea, I must write it down straight away or I'll forget it.



THAT'S NOT  
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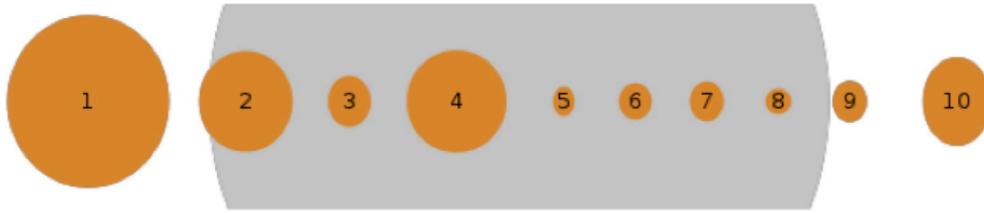
A large empty rectangular box for writing.

## Learning styles test - Auditory

Read each sentence carefully. Think about how each applies to you.

- 1 When reading, I listen to the words in my head, or I read aloud.
- 2 I need the chance to discuss things so that I can understand them.
- 3 I prefer it if someone tells me how to do something rather than having to read the directions myself.
- 4 I prefer hearing instructions rather than reading them.
- 5 I can easily follow what is being said without having to look at the speaker.
- 6 I remember what people say better than what they look like.
- 7 I remember things better if I study aloud with a partner.
- 8 It's hard for me to picture things in my head.
- 9 I find it helpful to talk myself through tasks.
- 10 When learning something new, I prefer to listen to information on it, then do it, rather than read how to do it.
- 11 I like to complete one task before starting another.

12 For a longer piece of work or revision it is easier for me to tape it rather than write it.



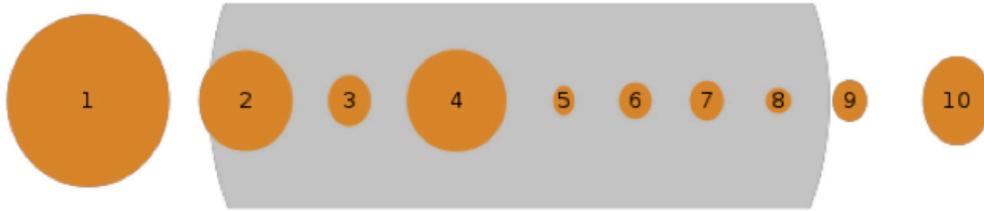
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## Learning styles test - Kinesthetic

Read each sentence carefully. Think about how each applies to you.

- 1 I don't like to read or listen to directions/instructions. I'd rather just start something..
- 2 I can study better when music is playing.
- 3 I need frequent refresher breaks when studying.
- 4 I think better when I have freedom to move around.  
Studying at a desk is very difficult for me.
- 5 When I can't think of the right word, I use my hands a lot and call it 'thingy' or a 'whatsit', etc. 1234
- 6 When beginning to read an article/book, I like to take a peep at the end of it.
- 7 I take notes but never go back and read them.
- 8 I may look disorganized but I know where everything is.
- 9 I use my fingers to count.
- 10 I move my lips when I read to myself.
- 11 I daydream.
- 12 I would rather create my own project than report on someone else's.



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A large empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for writing a response or explanation.

Why I wrote this workbook.

While growing up I thought I must have been adopted. My older sisters seemed to be so much smarter than me. They never got into as much trouble at home or at school as I did.

All through primary school I felt like the class idiot. People never seemed to know the real me. I had great ideas and thoughts going through my head. The problem was, I couldn't share them verbally or through writing. My drawings were great but a bit wild for most people to care about.

When I started high school things changed. Suddenly I started doing well in school and socially as well. It seemed like I was just getting better at everything as I got older. I used to stutter a bit when I felt pressured. I was nervous when getting back assignments and would have happily died rather than stand in front of the class to recite a poem or talk.

I learned to express myself more clearly through pictures. I passed exams by using pictures to represent key ideas that I needed to learn. My writing improved (ideas not the handwriting) so I was able to gain success in tests.

My life now is so much easier because I select visual and hands-on material for my self-learning. I might go to uni one day, but right now I am finding myself through creating visual ways to share good ideas.

By undertaking the pages in this workbook, you might find that you have strengths and weakness in your learning. Once you understand how you learn you can change your behaviours

in the classroom and other learning environments to better suit yourself.

Good luck.

Jack Canon

Boney Bum Books

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