



Keeping Play  
Cognitive

Hands-on,  
Minds-on



Zach Groshell  
PYP Design

Nanjing  
International  
School

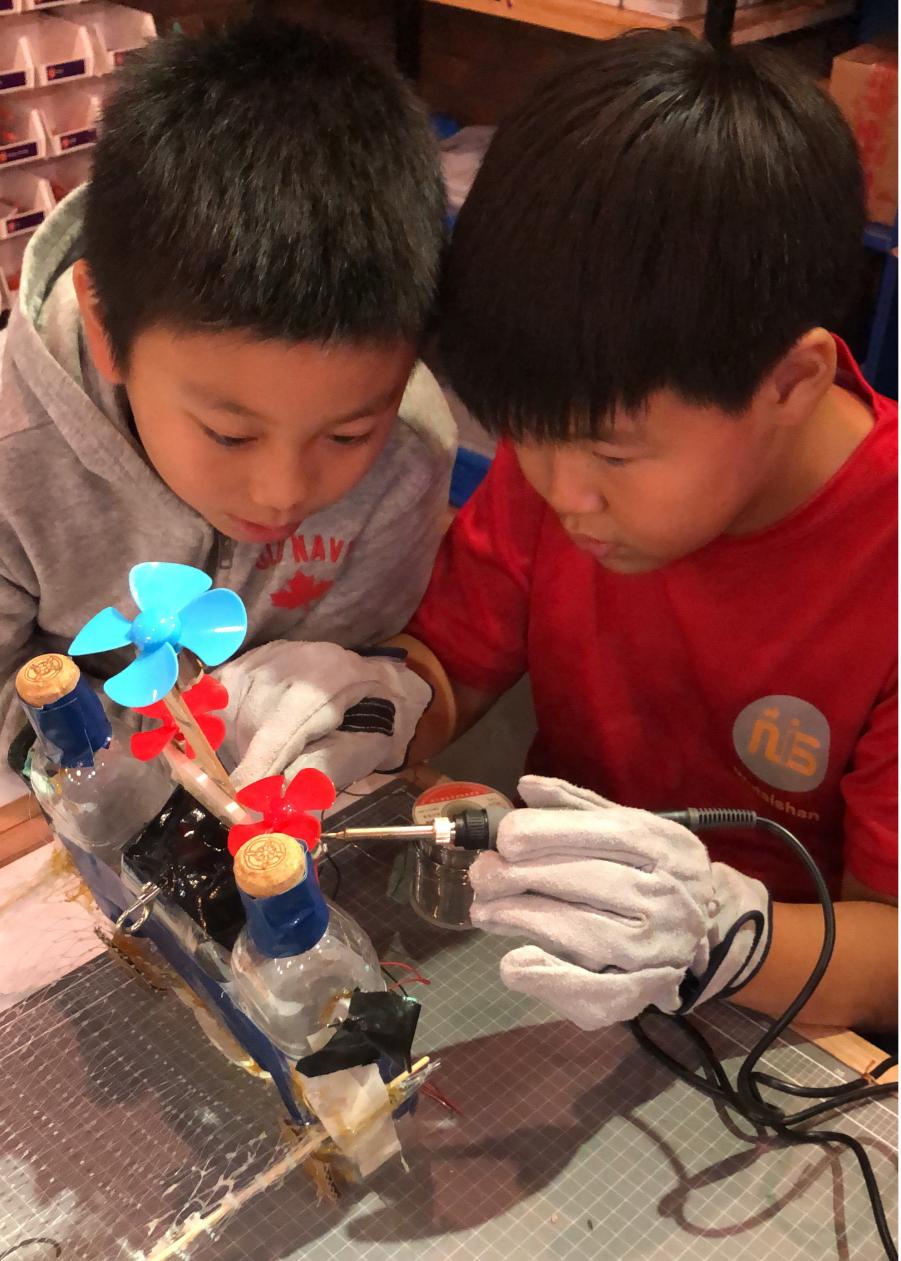
@mrzachg 

SCAN ME



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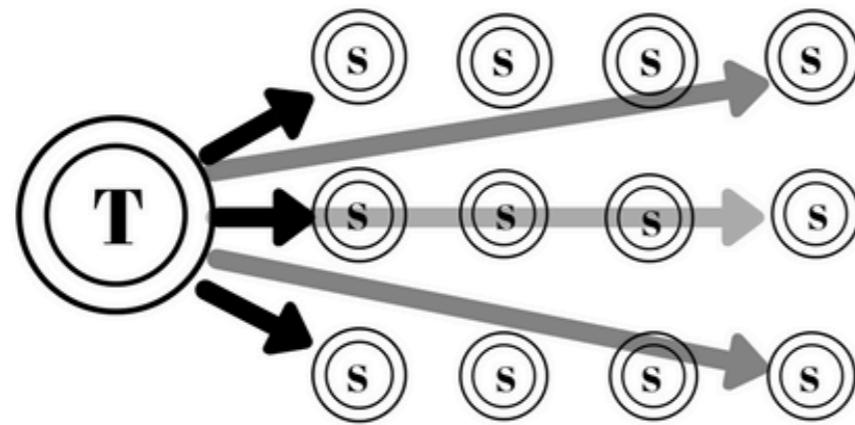




# My classroom

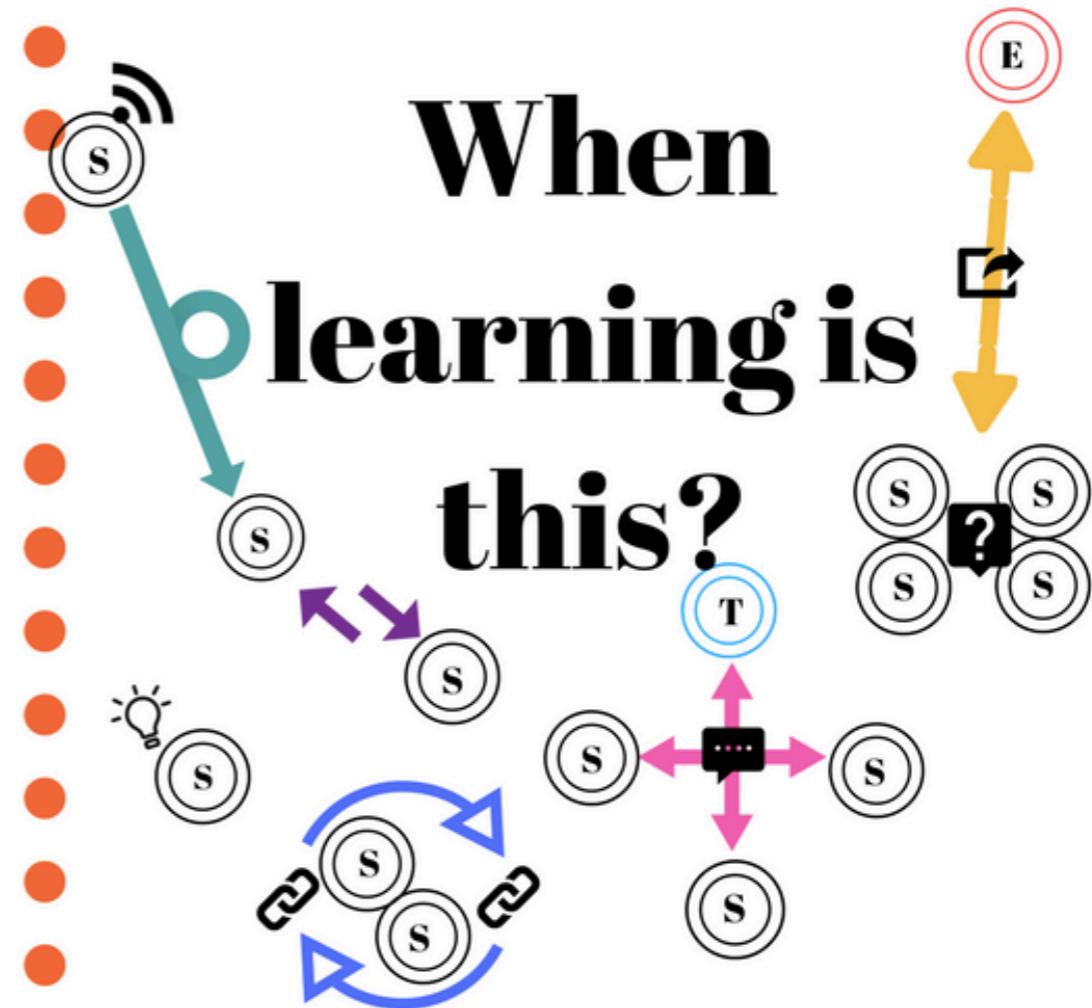
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# Why teach like this?

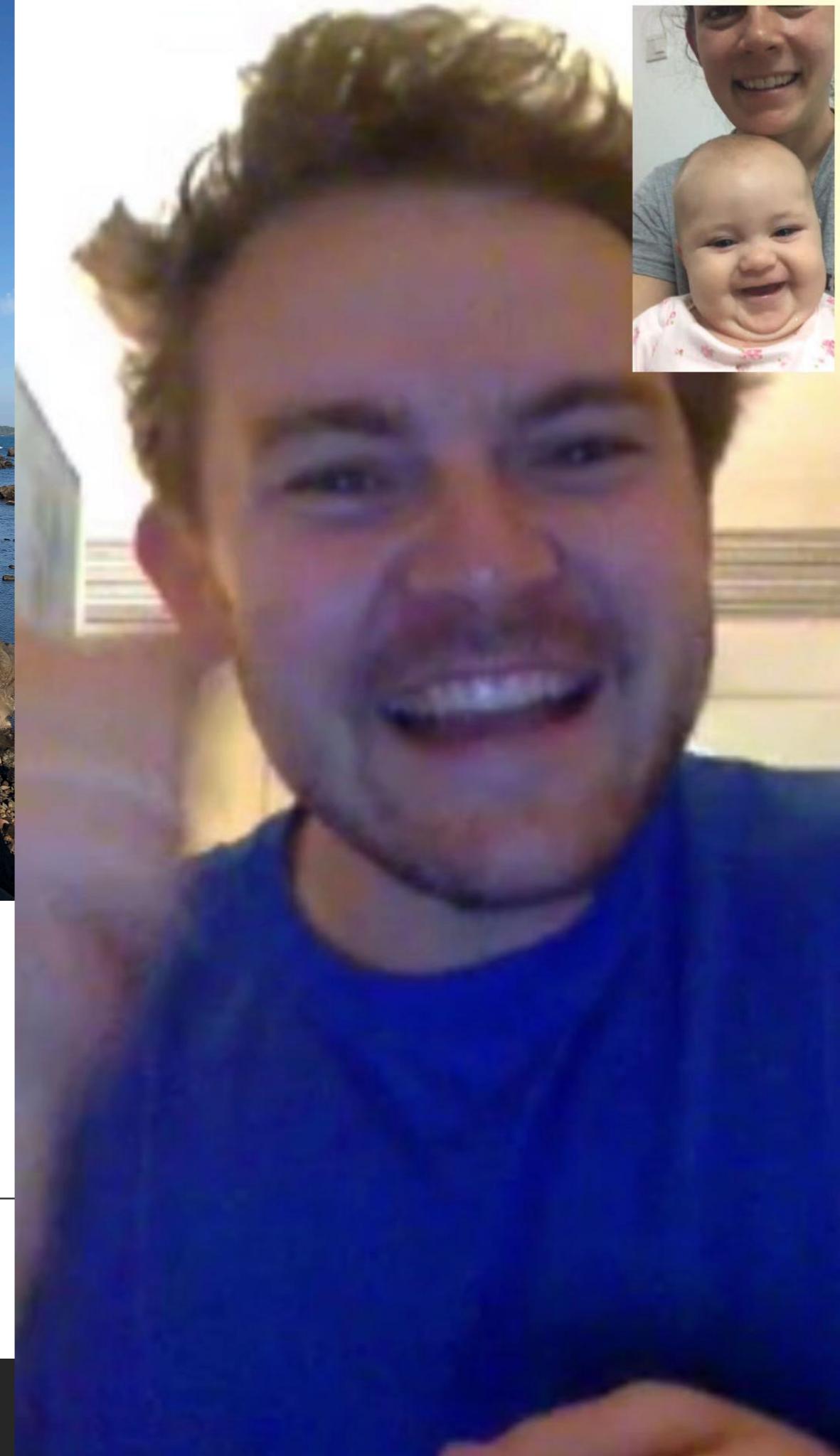


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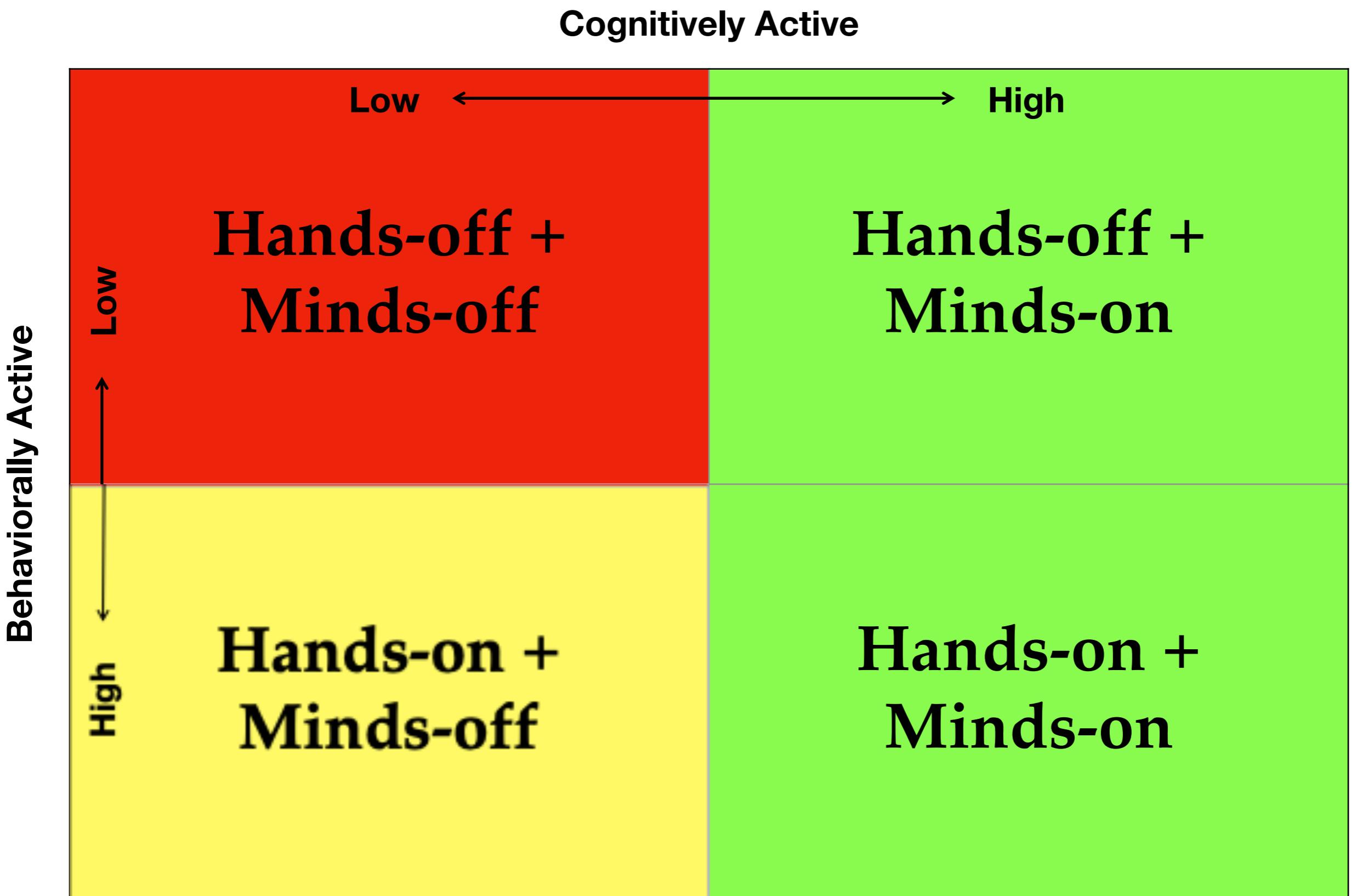
# When learning is this?



## After 100 Years of the Same Teaching Model It's Time to Throw Out the Playbook



# My daughter



Adapted from Mayer (2004)

In the future of learning  
now, play-based learning  
is best implemented  
when/if/by...

# Menu Choices

---

Should we train  
kids to multi-task?

Does play =  
learning?

Does making  
something yourself  
mean you'll end up  
liking it more?

Serial Players

Thoughts on  
improving hands-on  
learning

The voice and  
choice conundrum

“Why minimally  
guided instruction  
doesn’t work”

Okay, now you have  
me aroused!

Overloaded!

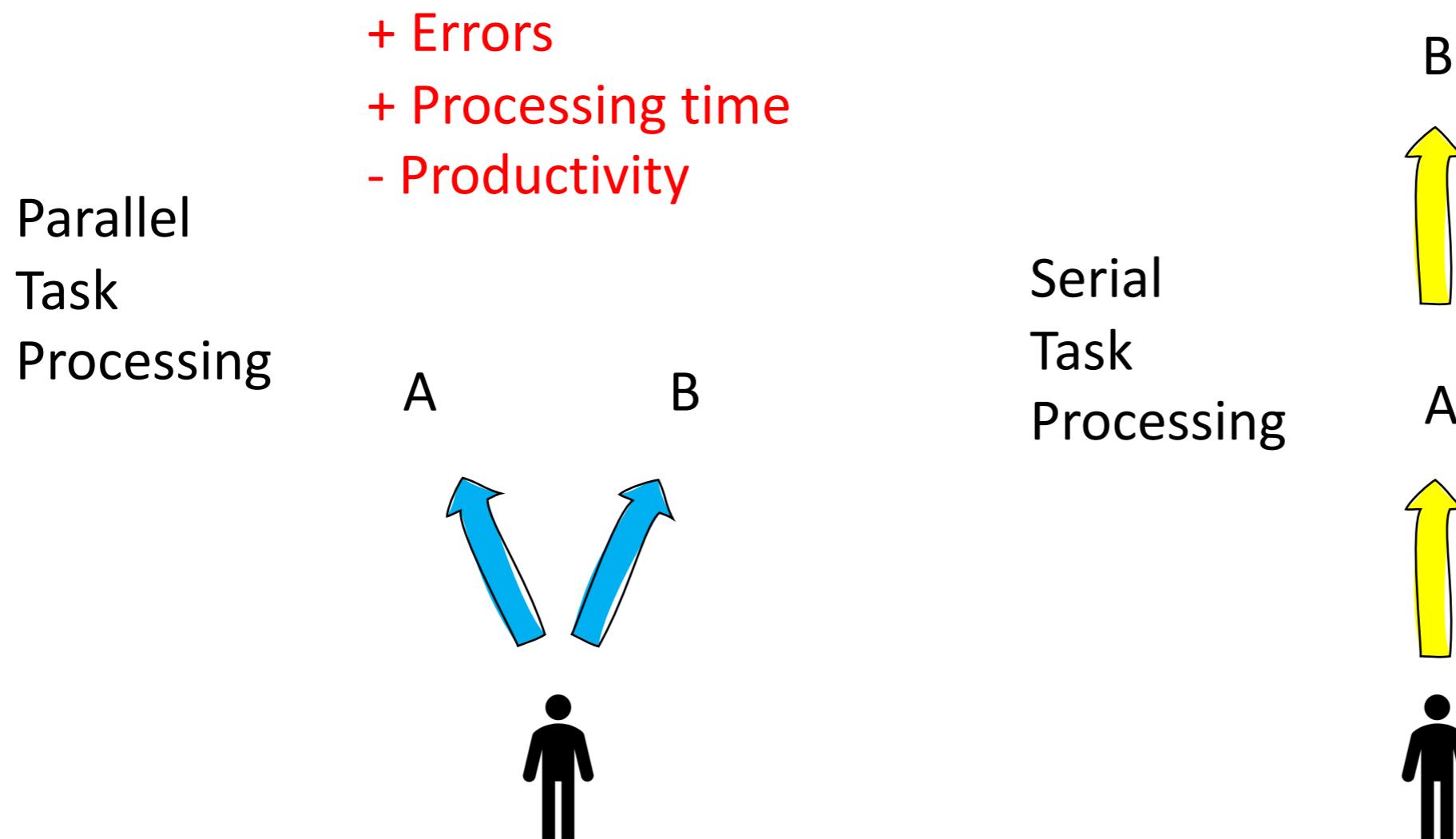
Learning should  
come naturally. But  
does it?

Genius hour  
schemes

Pockets of play

# Multitasking

(Pashler, 1994; Fischer & Plessow, 2015)



“Dual task interference”

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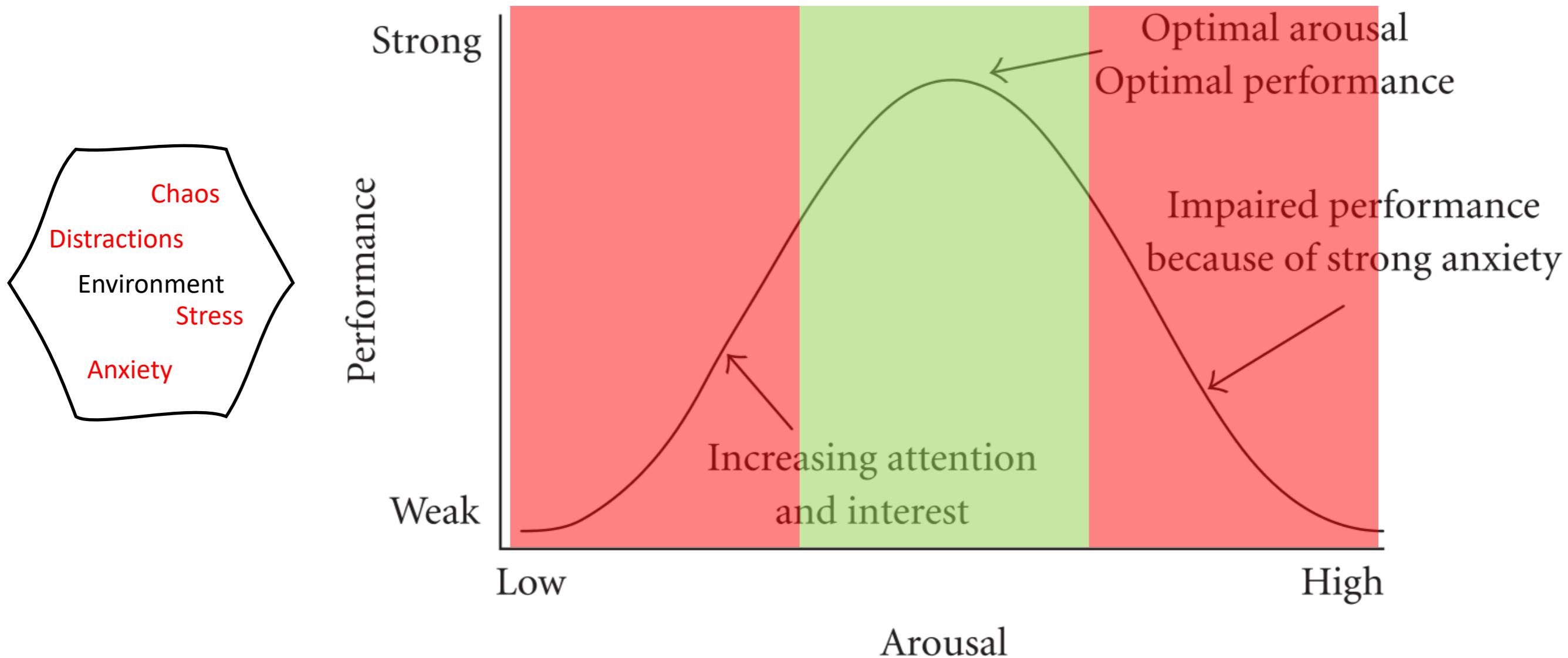
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# Yerkes-Dodson Law

(Diamond, Campbell, Park, Halonen, & Zoladz, 2007)



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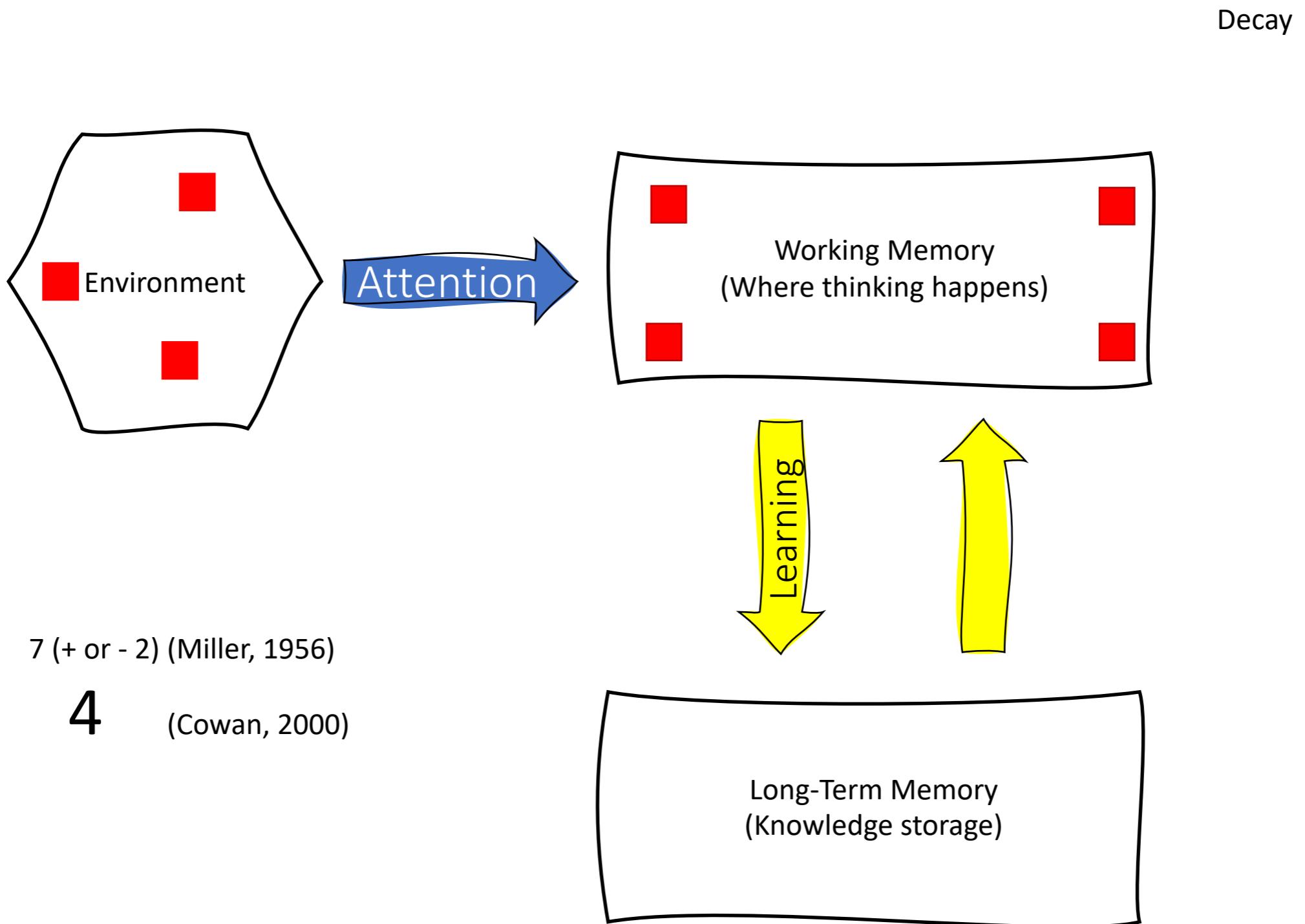
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ABCD 1945 XOXO 2019

Is it fair to say that play-based learning results in high cognitive load, and therefore leads to less learning?

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YES (AND WHY)

NO (AND WHY)

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Evolved to do these	Didn't evolve to do these
Biologically primary	Biologically secondary
Speaking	Reading
Social Cues	Writing
Walking	Arithmetic

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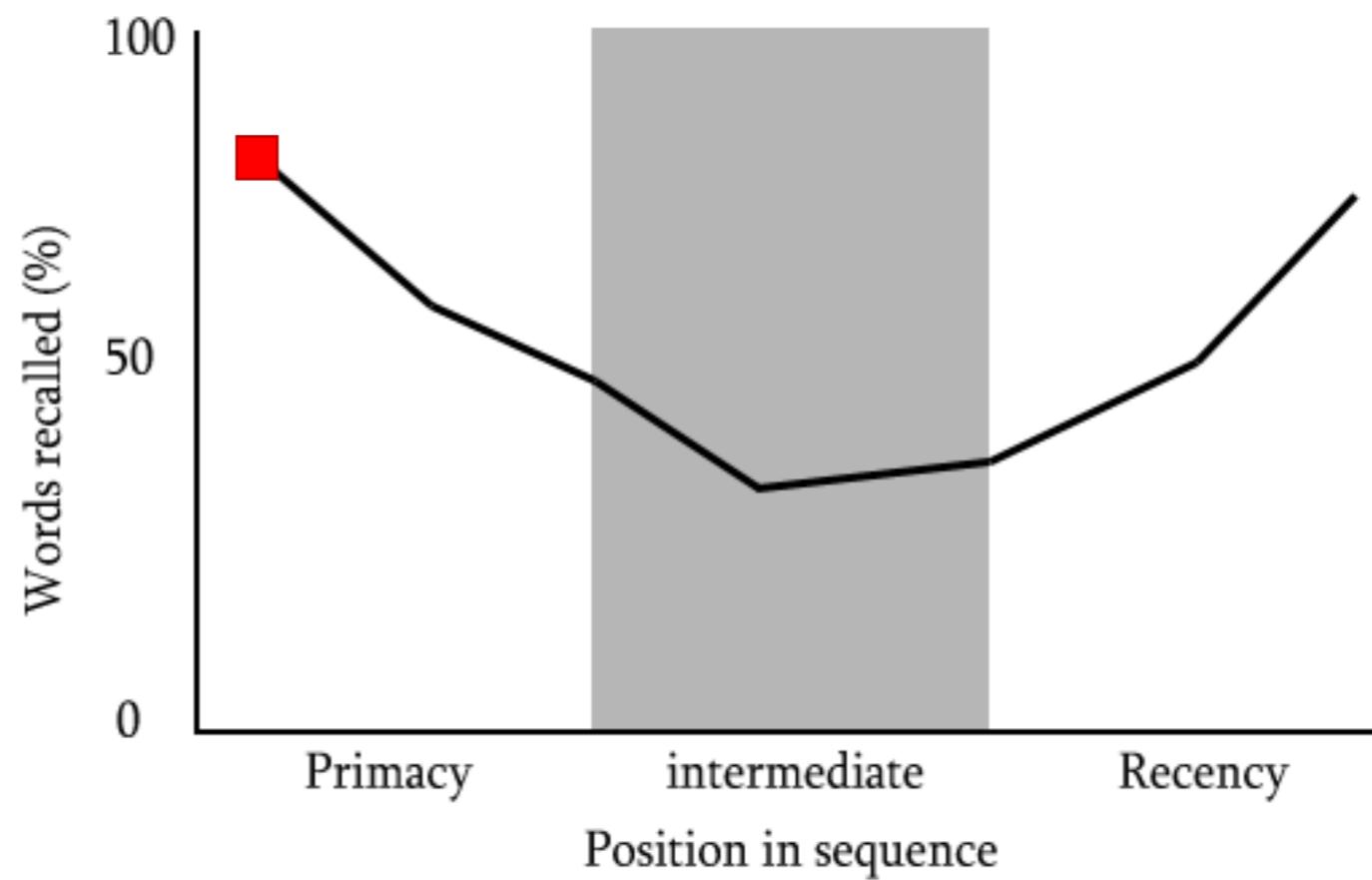
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# Serial Position Effect



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# More Play!

Play	Play	Play	Play	Play
Play	Play	Play	Play	Play
Play	Play	Play	Play	Play
Childhood-killing academics				
Childhood-killing academics				
Childhood-killing academics				
Childhood-killing academics				
Childhood-killing academics				

# Pockets of Play

Play	Play	Play	Play	Play
Play	Play	Play	Play	Play
Play		Play		Play
	Play		Play	
Play		Play	Play	
Play	Play	Play	Play	Play

# Pockets of Play

Morning play				
Math	Math	Math	Math	Math
Recess	Recess	Recess	Recess	Recess
Swimming	Writing	PE	Reading	Drama
Reading	Design	Reading	Art	Writing
PE	Reading	Drama	Design	Reading
UOI	UOI	UOI	UOI	UOI
ASA	ASA	ASA	ASA	ASA

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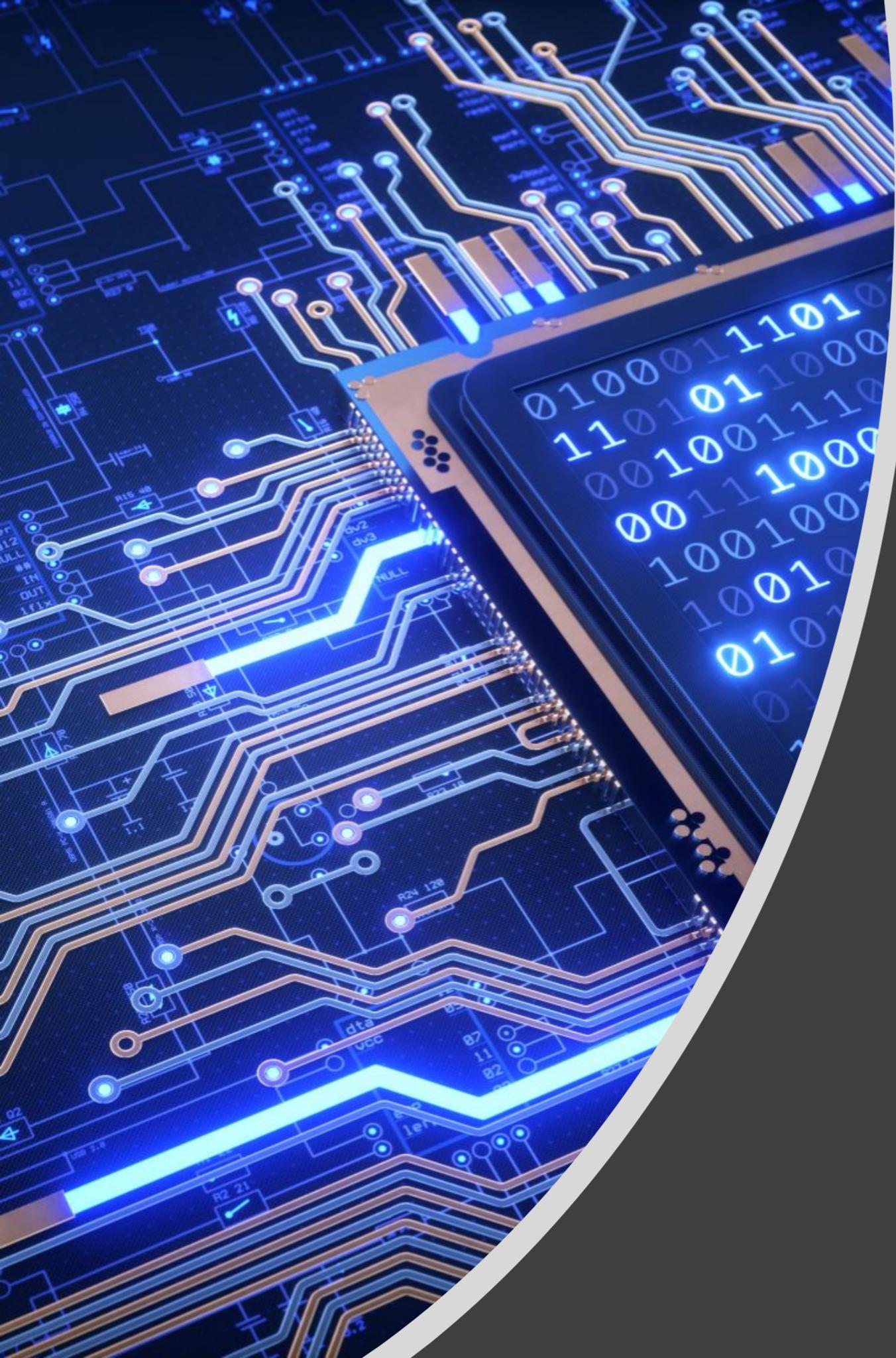
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X Block and  
CNU

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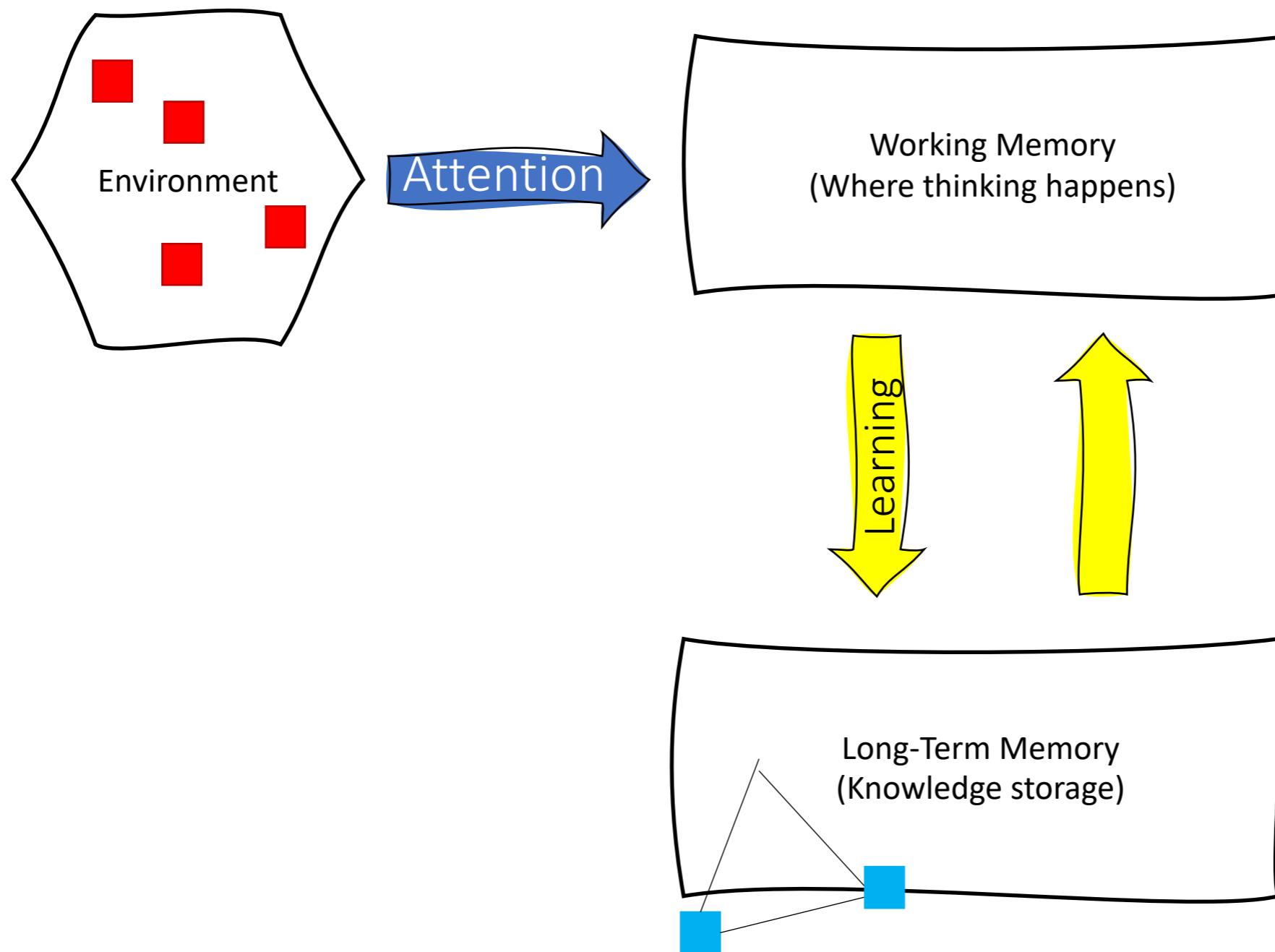
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Have a read.  
Thoughts?

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“Students tend to enjoy and choose the activities from which they learn the least”

In a review of 70 studies, lower aptitude students who chose unguided instructional treatments received significantly lower scores on posttests than on pretest measures.

Less able learners who chose less guided approaches tended to like the experience even though they learned less from it.

More able students often select *more guided* versions of courses, even though they learned less from it, probably because they believe that they will achieve the required learning with a minimum of effort (Clark, 1982).

## Voice and choice

- Examples of when voice and/or choice is not appropriate.
- Examples when voice and/or choice is appropriate.

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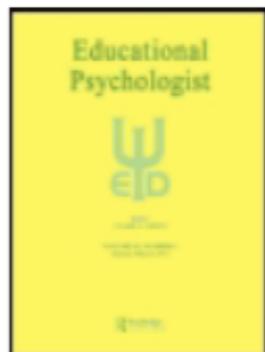
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## Why Minimal Guidance During Instruction Does Not Work: An Analysis of the Failure of Constructivist, Discovery, Problem-Based, Experiential, and Inquiry-Based Teaching

Paul A. Kirschner, John Sweller & Richard E. Clark

“The goal of this article is to suggest that based on our current knowledge of human cognitive architecture, minimally guided instruction is likely to be ineffective. The past half-century of empirical research on this issue has provided overwhelming and unambiguous evidence that minimal guidance during instruction is significantly less effective and efficient than guidance specifically designed to support the cognitive processing necessary for learning” (Kirshner, Sweller, & Clark, 2009, p. 76)

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FINAL VERSION



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International  
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# References and Further Reading

Mayer, R. E. (2004). Should There Be a Three-Strikes Rule Against Pure Discovery Learning? *American Psychologist*, 59(1), 14–19.  
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066x.59.1.14>

Geary, D. C. (2008). An evolutionarily informed education science. *Educational Psychologist*, 43(4), 179–195.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520802392133>

Blog post used in the presentation (Doug Lemov):

<https://teachlikeachampion.com/blog/the-paper-rocket-thoughts-on-improving-hands-on-learning/>

## Multitasking:

Adler, R. F., & Benbunan-Fich, R. (2012). Juggling on a high wire: Multitasking effects on performance. *International Journal of Human Computer Studies*, 70(2), 156–168.  
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Fischer, R., & Plessow, F. (2015). Efficient multitasking: Parallel versus serial processing of multiple tasks. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 6(September), 1–11.  
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## Working Memory Model:

Willingham, D. T. (2009). Why Students Don't Like School. *American Educator*, Spring 2009, 4–13. Retrieved from  
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## Social Categorization:

Tajfel, H., Billig, M. G., Bundy, R. P. & Flament, C. (1971) 'Social categorization and intergroup behaviour', European Journal of Social Psychology, 1(2), 149-178.

## Yerkes-Dodson Law (Optimal Arousal):

Diamond, D. M., Campbell, A. M., Park, C. R., Halonen, J., & Zoladz, P. R. (2007). The temporal dynamics model of emotional memory processing: A synthesis on the neurobiological basis of stress-induced amnesia, flashbulb and traumatic memories, and the Yerkes-Dodson law. *Neural Plasticity*, 2007. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2007/60803>

## Expertise Reversal Effect:

Kalyuga, S., Ayres, P., Chandler, P., & Sweller, J. (2003). The Expertise Reversal Effect. *Educational Psychologist*, 38(1), 23–31.  
<https://doi.org/10.1207/S15326985EP3801>

Clark, R. E. (1982). Antagonism between achievement and enjoyment in ATI studies. *Educational Psychologist*, 17, 92–101

## Priming effects:

Vohs, K. D., Mead, N. L., & Goode, M. R. (2008). Merely activating the concept of money changes personal and interpersonal behavior. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 17(3), 208–212.  
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Bateson, M., Callow, L., Holmes, J. R., Redmond Roche, M. L., & Nettle, D. (2013). Do images of “watching eyes” induce behaviour that is more pro-social or more normative? A field experiment on littering. *PLoS ONE*, 8(12), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0082055>

## Cognitive Load

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## Domain Knowledge and Brainstorming:

Rietzschel, E. F., Nijstad, B. A., & Stroebe, W. (2007). Relative accessibility of domain knowledge and creativity: The effects of knowledge activation on the quantity and originality of generated ideas. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 43(6), 933–946.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2006.10.014>

## Worked examples and process sheets:

Ward, M., & Sweller, J. (1990). Structuring effective worked examples. *Cognition and Instruction*, 7, 1–39.

Nadolski, R. J., Kirschner, P. A., & Van Merriënboer, J. J. G. (2005). Optimizing the number of steps in learning tasks for complex skills. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 75(2), 223–237.

<https://doi.org/10.1348/000709904X22403>

## Scaffolding:

Wasik, B. A., & Jacobi-Vessels, J. L. (2017). Word Play: Scaffolding Language Development Through Child-Directed Play. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 45(6), 769–776. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-016-0827-5>

## Working Memory Capacity:

Cowan, N. (2000). The magical number 4 in short-term memory: A reconsideration of mental storage capacity. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 24, 87–185.

Miller, G. A. (1956). The magical number seven, plus or minus two: some limits on our capacity for processing information. *Psychological Review*, 63(2), 81–97. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0043158>

## The Research Question (Podcast)

<http://bit.ly/mrzachgpodcast>



## Testing Effect:

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## Serial Position Curve:

Martinez, M. E. (2010). *Learning and cognition: The Design of the Mind*. Upper Saddle River, NJ [u.a.]: Merrill.

## Cognitively Active

