

The Emotions of Color ©copyright by Robert (Bob) Lucas

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Brain researchers have explored the way that color impacts the brain and specifically, it's impact on learning. One book on the topic of color -- *The Power of Color* by Dr. Morton Walker --- offers insight into integrating color into many aspects of your life.

The value of color research and the way the brain reacts to it cannot be understated. Think of traditional classrooms, conference and meeting rooms. Do the colors stimulate or soothe and lower energy? What color are the average classroom handouts? In what color are many books printed? In what ways do most trainers and educators introduce color into their learning environments? If you realized that the answers to these questions point to a lack of color, then you have recognized the point. Although color is so powerful in conveying messages to learners, it is often absent or misused.

Researchers have found that in addition to light, sound, motion, aromas, variety, novelty and a number of other environmental elements, color can attract and hold attention. It can also stimulate the firing of neurons in the brain which can lead to enhanced learning and retention.

To address this color deficit in your own learning environments and meetings, try doing some simple things like:

- Add brightly colored cover sheets to handouts;
- Use various colored markers for writing on flip charts and other writing surfaces;
- Wear bright colored shirts or blouses versus white ones;
- Add color to the environment by doing simple things as putting colorful flip chart pages, posters, balloons, or other colored items that tie to your course content on the walls;
- Use colored props (e.g. Koosh balls, hand clappers, stickers, smile face stress balls, or other items for manipulation) on learner tables that not only add color but also provide quiet personal distractions and can be integrated into the program content; and
- Draw attention to color in activities. For example, choose a group leader or notetaker (scribe) by designating the person with the most of a specified color on to assume that role.

By understanding the impact that color has on the subconscious mind, you can potentially harness its power in designing and using your learning environment, posters, handouts, and other support materials. For example, while cool, darker colors can

soothe, calm and relax, bright, hot and neon colors can stimulate, excite, grab attention, and raise emotions.

The following is a listing of some of the emotions evoked by color:

COLOR	EMOTIONS STIMULATED
Red	Stimulates and evokes excitement, passion, power, energy, anger, intensity. Also, can indicate "stop," negativity, financial trouble or shortage.
Yellow	Indicates caution, warmth, mellowness, positive meaning, optimism and cheerfulness. It can also stimulate thinking and visioning.
Dark Blue	Depending on shade, can relax, soothe, indicate maturity, and evoke trust, and tranquility or peace.
Light Blue	Cool, youthful, or masculine image can be projected.
Purple	Projects assertiveness or boldness, youthfulness and a contemporary image. Often used as a sign of royalty, richness, spirituality, or power.
Orange	Can indicate high energy or enthusiasm. Emotional and sometimes stimulates positive thinking. Organic image can result.
Brown	An earth tone that creates a feeling of security, wholesomeness, strength, support, and a lack of pretentiousness.
Green	Can remind of nature, productivity, positive image, moving forward or "go," comforting, growth, or financial success or prosperity. Also, can give a feeling of balance.
Gold/Silver	Illustrates prestige, status, wealth, elegance, or conservative image.
Pink	Projects a youthful, feminine, or warm image.
White	Typically used to illustrate purity, cleanliness, honesty, wholesomeness, enhance colors used and provide visual relaxation.
Black	Represents a lack of color. Creates sense of independence, completeness and solidarity. Often used to indicate financial success, death, seriousness or heaviness of situation.

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