

15th Annual
Hawker Brownlow
**Thinking &
Learning**
Conference

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**DONNA WILSON &
MARCUS CONYERS**

SUNDAY 20 MAY
Session 1

**Making Learning Meaningful
in Your Classroom**

MELBOURNE

DR DONNA WILSON

Donna Wilson, PhD, is an educational and school psychologist whose work in cognitive education focuses on areas including cognition in the classroom, metacognition, attention, memory, motivation, and improving teaching and learning. She is an adjunct professor and lead developer of graduate programs with majors in brain-based teaching with Nova Southeastern University and head of academic affairs for the Center for Innovative Education and Prevention.



DR MARCUS CONYERS

Dr Marcus Conyers is an international keynote speaker with a passion for improving human performance through original frameworks for connecting mind, brain, well-being, and leadership research to practice. He is the co-author of 20 books, including *Positively Smarter: Science and Strategies for Increasing Happiness, Achievement, and Well-being* (Wiley, 2015), *Smarter Teacher Leadership: Neuroscience and the Power of Purposeful Collaboration* (Teachers College Press, 2016), and *Introduction to BrainSMART® Teaching* (Hawker Brownlow Education, 2018).



Dr Conyers is co-developer of the world's first doctoral minor in Brain-Based Leadership and the first Educational Specialist and Master of Science degree programs in Brain-Based Teaching (BrainSMART® Programs) in partnership with Nova Southeastern University. He serves as a research supervisor for the Ph.D. program in Professional Practice: Psychological Perspectives with Canterbury Christ Church University. Research for his Ph.D. with the University of Westminster focused on improving practice through application of the education, mind, brain, and implementation sciences.

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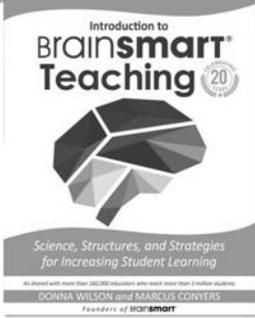
Making Learning Meaningful in Your Classroom

Every student's brain is as unique as a fingerprint shaped by their accumulated learning experiences. Effective teaching practice involves supporting the process of creating meaning in the minds of learners. In this session, participants will discover the science of how the brain makes meaning and guiding principles for supporting this process. Additionally, a toolbox of practical strategies for helping students make meaning will be modelled and discussed. Specific examples will be given from academic content such as maths, science, humanities and social sciences, and literacy.

Objectives and Outcomes:

- **Meaning making in the mind and brain**
- **Principles for helping students make meaning**
- **Toolbox of ten classroom strategies for helping students make meaning**

Making Learning Meaningful in Your Classroom



Presentation by Marcus Conyers, PhD
and Donna Wilson, PhD
taken from their book,
Introduction to BrainSMART Teaching.

M.eaning

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What is BRAINSMART.?

- An approach to teaching that supports teachers by giving you practical strategies for teaching so students are able to learn more.
- Based upon selected education, mind, and brain research now known as an applied science of learning.

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Objectives and Outcomes

- * Meaning making in the mind and brain
- * Principles for helping students make meaning
- * Toolbox of 10 classroom strategies for helping students make meaning

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Meaning-making



Meaning-making has been used in constructivist psychology to refer to the theory of knowledge that individuals create to help them to make sense of what they are experiencing.

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Because each person is unique, shaped by their experiences, meaning is different for each individual.



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Strategy 1: Meaningful Relationships 5 Special Personal Minutes



- * Our graduates say...
- * “Students learn from me because they know I care.”

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Meaning occurs throughout the brain.



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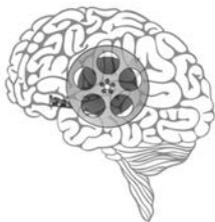
Making Learning Meaningful



Principle: Effective teachers help students to create personal meaning from the lesson.

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Strategy 2: Make a Brain Movie



Visualizing the story helps create meaning in the mind. Each student's "Brain Movie" is unique based on their past experiences.

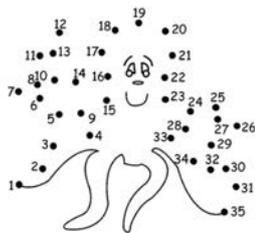
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Practice Active Visualization

- 1) Ask children what they imagine when they hear music and sensory-rich language. One of our favorites "What a Wonderful World."
- 2) Read passages to students that have rich sensory language and ask them to visualize their own personal brain movie of the scene painted by the words.
- 3) Pair up students and direct them to take turns actively visualizing and describing a book or favorite room in their home. (Practicing this key skill of visualizing).
- 4) When assigning print selections, select some appropriate reading rich in sensory words and remind students to make a movie in their minds to create meaningful reading.

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Strategy 3: Assist students to make connections.



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Post-it notes show what the class is learning and new connections are added each week.

Learning Depicted Throughout the Year

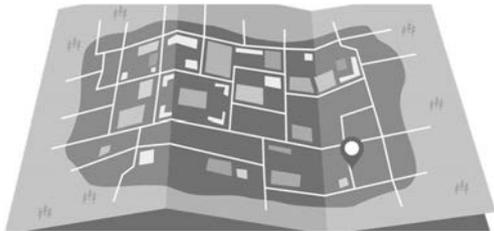


This visual features a group brain with post-it notes that depict what the class has been learning during the year (cognitive schema).

Photo credit: Diane Dahl

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Map It Out: Year End Mapping



K-W-L



K-W-L

- Know: What do I already know about the topic we are studying?
- Want to know: What do I want to know?
- Learned: What did I learn about this topic?

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My learning about Melbourne...

Connecting to what you know that is interesting personally makes learning meaningful. A history example...

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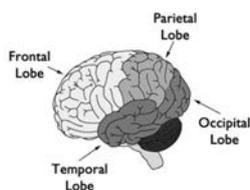


Making Learning Meaningful

Principle: Help students make meaning by using the brain's multiple pathways for learning .

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4 Lobes for Making Meaning



- Frontal: Thinking & motor
- Parietal: Integration of stimuli & close to motor strip.
- Occipital: Vision
- Temporal: Hearing & memory

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Strategy 4: Graphic Organizers (a science example)



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Strategy 5: Take a Field Trip: Real or Virtual



Virtual or real

* Mr. Bear's story...

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We took 6th graders on a virtual field trip through time and place.



Time travel over decades from urban Florida to rural Oklahoma and the history of harder times.

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Preparing to come to Australia, we went on a personal journey through time and place.



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A Virtual Trip with Word Play



Marcus called Donna on his Dog and Bone to see if she wanted to go out for a Ruby Murray!

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Strategy 6: Choice and Interest Can Make All the Difference "Nick's Story"



When assigning books, projects, and other coursework, give learners choice based on personal interests.

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Strategy 7: Nonlinguistic Representations



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Strategy 8: Power of Cartoons



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Strategy 9: Sensory Language



Use the power of sensory language in the classroom.

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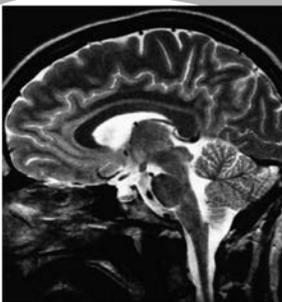
Making Learning Meaningful



Principle: Teach relevant and important concepts rather than only disconnected facts.

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Include 'why' should we learn this. Connect to the emotions.



- What are the benefits of the lesson? [Survival]
- How will understanding and applying this concept or using this skill make life better?
 - Increase emotional connections. [HealthMath]

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Strategy 10: Teach Health Math



A great math example for making meaning!

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Bonus Strategy: Give plenty of time for reflection and dialogue.



Allow processing time: internal reflection and dialoging with a partner to help make meaning in a social context.

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Until we meet again:
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BrainSMART® Original Strategies

from Dr. Marcus Conyers and Dr. Donna Wilson's Workshop

Making Learning Meaningful in Your Classroom

- ◆ **Strategy 1: Meaningful Relationships: 5 Special Minutes**
- ◆ **Strategy 2: Make a Brain Movie**
- ◆ **Strategy 3: Make Connections**
- ◆ **Strategy 4: Graphic Organizers**
- ◆ **Strategy 5: Take a Field Trip: Real or Virtual**
- ◆ **Strategy 6: Maximize Student Interest and Offer Choice**
- ◆ **Strategy 7: Non-linguistic Representations**
- ◆ **Strategy 8: Power of Cartoons**
- ◆ **Strategy 9: Sensory Language**
- ◆ **Strategy 10: Teach HealthMath**

Sample BrainSMART® strategies from Dr. Conyers and Dr. Wilson's Workshop

Con't next page



STRATEGY

The Power of Relationship: Five Minutes

Effective teachers know how important it is to show we care for our students' well-being. Our graduates, Melissa Smith and Gina Brinkley echo the sentiment, "Students learn from me because they know I care." We like the idea of spending the first five minutes of class to draw students into a relaxed discussion. Teachers might ask about the students' day and if there is anything exciting

happening during the week. Topics might range from pets, games, sports, TV shows, music, or other topics students want to talk about. These conversations can be several minutes with a few students or a larger discussion, but if it is habitual it can yield great rewards as we practice listening to our students and gaining their trust.



STRATEGY

Teach relevant and important concepts rather than only disconnected facts.

Thinking for Health with HealthMath

Research from the classrooms with the highest mathematics test scores in the world indicate that students must have extensive practice with real-world applications of mathematical principles to excel on standardized tests. Our mission is to equip every student with the ability to think critically and mathematically about what they eat and how they exercise so that they build a healthy Body-Brain System and a lifelong mastery of mathematics. This is critical today as childhood obesity is at epidemic levels.

The BrainSMART® HealthMath Process

We support teachers and parents as they help students to develop a strong number sense about the relationship between what they eat, how they exercise, and how those choices affect their energy level and wellness. Just a few examples of project-based learning include suggesting that students create a new labeling system for food products to support healthy decisions by consumers. They could create surveys to research the effectiveness of their work. Students could also be encouraged to read labels and pack their own healthy lunches and snacks. Students discover key information and are able to answer questions like:

1. How many calories worth of exercise do you need to burn a pound of body fat?
2. If you consumed 192 calories less per day, how many pounds could you lose in a year?
3. How many spoonfuls of sugar are there in a 12 oz. can of soda?
4. How far would you have to walk to burn the calories from one can of soda?
5. How many calories does a pound of body fat burn per day?
6. How many calories does a pound of muscle burn per day?
7. If you eat the recommended daily servings of fruits and vegetables, how many is that a week?
8. How many calories do you burn by walking a mile?
9. How many calories do you need to burn per week to maximize health?
10. How many pounds of sugar does the average American consume in a year?

Sample BrainSMART® strategies from Dr. Conyers and Dr. Wilson's Workshop

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STRATEGY

Making Connections to What Has Been Learned: Celebrating Learning with Year Mapping

One of our popular strategies teachers enjoy planning during the year and using at the end of the school year is a practical, easy-to-use tool we call "Celebrating Learning with Year Mapping." This activity gives your current students a chance to feel good about what they have learned, while providing incoming students an opportunity to see real evidence that they can be successful learners in the coming school year. This activity also gives teachers a chance to enjoy seeing students share what they have learned and to internalize their successful teaching.

Several elements that comprise this strategy make it a powerful way to end the school year with a positive

experience, often much needed after testing is over and as a busy year comes to an end! Teachers enjoy

using year mapping because, with prompted recall, each student can remember learning events that mean the most to them. Year-end mapping utilizes the power of positive teacher–student relationships and celebration, personalized learning, summarizing, graphic organizers, and group learning.

First	<input type="text"/>
next	<input type="text"/>
Then	<input type="text"/>
Last	<input type="text"/>

The following steps can be used to create a visual representation of key content studied over the year and become a catalyst for celebrating learning successes:

- Step 1:** As you approach the end of the year with your students, announce that they will be planning an exciting project.
- Step 2:** Let students know that the class will create a large map of what they've learned about the content you've taught. The maps can be created with a variety of graphic organizers.
- Step 3:** Use prompted recall to help students remember important learning events and knowledge and skills learned over the year.
- Step 4:** Guide student groups of four to work on a specific part of the curriculum.
- Step 5:** Assemble the giant map (made up of a collection of the group maps), ideally on a large wall space of the classroom.
- Step 6:** Ask each student in turn to present one part of the map. These short presentations could include materials that helped them learn, such as books, drawings, pictures, notes, articles, or other meaningful artifacts.
- Step 7:** Rehearse the presentation.
- Step 8:** Invite groups of students who may be in your class next year to come to the presentation and be taught by your current class.

Questions you might want to ask your students who are moving up to the next grade include: How does this activity make you feel as we pull our giant map together and reflect on what we have learned during the school year? What have you learned that makes you most pleased?

At the end of the presentation to students who will be moving up to the grade level you teach, a good question might be: What are you most excited about learning next year?

The year mapping strategy gives teachers a way to relate to individual students around their successful learning—and to revisit some of their own favorite lessons and interactions with students over the past year. It gives students a chance to create fascinating

graphic organizers that help them arrange evidence of their year of learning with visual appeal.

The power of this strategy is in how it helps both students and teachers internalize learning and celebrate it. Feel free to be creative in the way you use this strategy so that it works best for you and your students at this special time of the year!

Working in groups often provides an emotional "hook" that makes the learning experience more meaningful and memorable for students. Group work makes it possible for all students to play a part in learning as individual contributions may vary dramatically from student to student.

Sample BrainSMART® strategies from Dr. Conyers and Dr. Wilson's Workshop

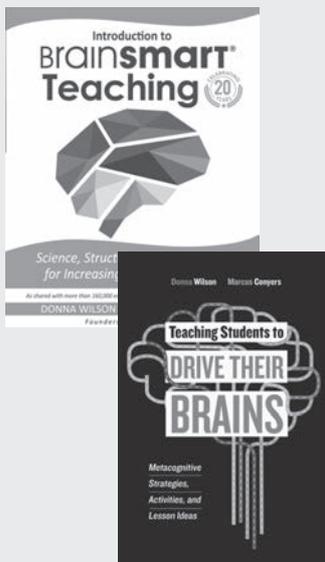
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STRATEGY Practice Active Visualization Make a Brain Movie

- 1) Ask children what they imagine when they hear music and sensory-rich language. One of our favorites "What a Wonderful World."
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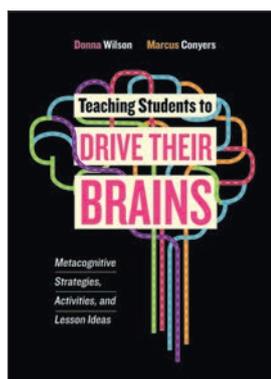
Selected books by Dr. Marcus Conyers and Dr. Donna Wilson:

Wilson, D.L., & Conyers, M.A. (2018). *Introduction to BrainSMART® Teaching: Science, Structures, and Strategies for Increasing Student Learning*. This practical selection includes an introduction to the SMART model and more than 60 easy-to-use teaching strategies that have been found to engage virtually all students in learning. This selection has many strategies to support teachers to engage students' attention.

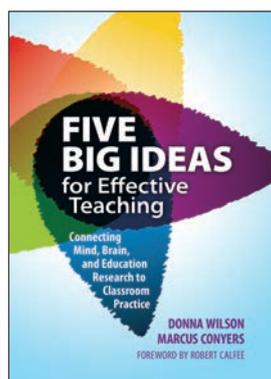
Wilson, D.L., & Conyers, M.A. (2016). *Teaching Students to Drive Their Brains: Metacognitive Strategies, Activities, and Lesson Ideas*. This book provides teachers with the most practical approach we have seen for guiding students to become more metacognitive and includes a chapter on increasing selective attention and working memory.

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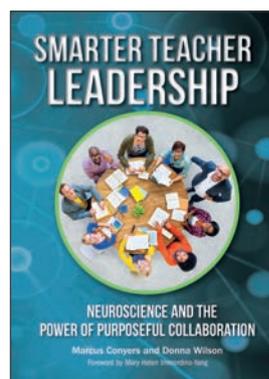
Qty	Code	Title	Price
	117002	Teaching Students to Drive Their Brains: Metacognitive Strategies, Activities, and Lesson Ideas	\$32.95
	TCP0676	Five Big Ideas for Effective Teaching: Connecting Mind, Brain and Education Research to Classroom Practice	\$32.95
	TCP4179	Smarter Teacher Leadership: Neuroscience and the Power of Purposeful Collaboration	\$35.95
	HB6623	Introduction to BrainSMART Teaching: Science, Structures and Strategies for Increasing Student Learning	\$49.95
Total (plus freight) \$			



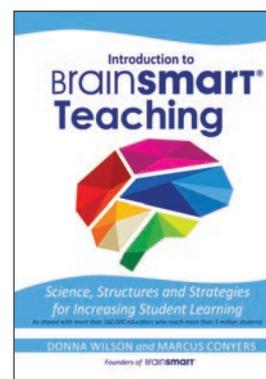
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