# 15th Annual Hawker Brownlow Thinking & \_earning Conference

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# **MARCUS CONYERS**

FRIDAY 18 MAY Session 2

**Unleashing the Power** of Teacher Wellbeing - Part 1

**MELBOURNE** 







# 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 coauthor 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.

# A message from Hawker Brownlow Education

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KEY POINTS FROM DR MARCUS CONYERS'

# Unleashing the Power of Teacher Wellbeing

Discover how research on links between wellbeing and performance can transform our ability to reach our potential as educators, while also achieving more joy in our lives. Every school day, the educator's brain makes thousands of decisions and burns around 600 kilojoules. Fuelling the brain with the right nutrition and the right kinds of physical activity can make a positive difference in terms of energy, motivation and sense of wellbeing. Furthermore, learning how to support a positive outlook while reducing stress can support our health and make us, in a sense, positively smarter. Leave this learning event inspired and empowered with some practical ideas you can apply right away with benefits that can build over a lifetime.

# **Objectives and Outcomes:**

- How the brain is the engine of wellbeing
- Nutrition and exercise: Powering the brain for wellbeing
- Positive strategies for reducing stress

# Unleashing the Power of Teacher Well-being



Adapted from Positively Smarter:
Science and Strategies
for Increasing
Happiness, Achievement,
and Well-Being

Marcus Conyers, PhD

# Objectives and Outcomes

- How the brain is the engine of wellbeing
- Nutrition and exercise: Powering the brain for wellbeing
- · Positive strategies for reducing stress

# Teaching Takes a Lot of Energy!



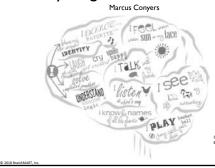
Teachers around the world tell us that teaching takes a lot of energy. We agree!

# Teacher Wellness Can Be a Wellspring for More Positive Energy and Reduced Stress.



In our work over 20 years with 160,000 teachers around the world, we have always put teacher wellness and well-being as a key priority.

# "The Brain Influences Everything, and Everything Influences the Brain"



### How to Get the Best from Your Body-Brain System and Support Well-being Through...

- Lifelong learning: A fountain of youth (Congratulations for living this with us today!)
   The power of positive affect, optimism, and happiness (Research on the benefits and a toolbox of practical strategies)
- Stress management (Especially for teachers)
- 4. Harnessing the benefits of healthy nutrition
- Aerobic and strength training
- 6. Sleep
- Creating positive connections
- Our PEAK Process for adapting and applying what we are learning today

# I. Lifelong Learning: A Fountain of Youth

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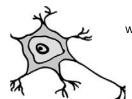
# Lifelong Learning: The Great News!



- The brain can get positively smarter as we age!
- Learning changes the structure and function of the human brain.
- Research suggests you can grow more neurons and make connections as you learn throughout your life!

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# Four Strategies for Creating Engagement and Facilitating Active Learning

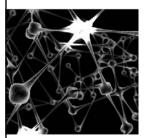


What Creates Connections?

- Novelty
- Challenge
- Practice
- Feedback

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### Making Brain Connections with Optimistic Engaged Learning

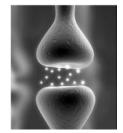


If I am ...

- alert, on the ball,
- engaged,
- · motivated,
- ready for active learning
- ... then neurotransmitters that enable learning are released. Think of an "on" switch.

### **Experience-Dependent Synaptogenesis**

Brain connections influenced by proper conditions for active learning and thinking

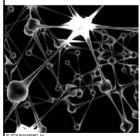


### Experience-Dependent

Each human becomes different depending on their genetics and learning environment.

- Vocabulary development Health and wellness habits Playing a musical instrument

# Potential Fueled by Plasticity: **Experience-Dependent** Synaptogenesis



- It is important to keep the role of brain plasticity and malleability in facilitating learning for *all* front of mind. This is *why* we can have high expectations for all students [and ourselves] to succeed.
- Plasticity also provides teachers with a scientific understanding of why we can and should learn across the lifespan.

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# Learning Changes the Brain

Myth:

The brain is largely fixed in adulthood.

Reality:

The brain has the capacity to change throughout life in response to experiences.

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# Hazel Powell: A Lifelong Learner



©BrainSMART® 2016

# More Ideas for Inspiring Lifelong Learning

- Engage in learning events.
- Read a variety of books with the goal of sharing what you learn.
- Take up new sports or activities (tai chi, running, strength training).
- Learn an instrument, create music, write songs.
- Learn fun skills like new recipes.

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# 2. THE POWER OF POSITIVE AFFECT, OPTIMISM, AND HAPPINESS (STRESS PREVENTION)

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# The Power of Positive Affect, Optimism, and Happiness



- Benefits
- Strategies

Optimism Activates the Left

**Prefrontal Cortex** 



"Enthusiastic people have more activity in the left prefrontal lobes of their brains, while those with more active prefrontal lobes tend to get stuck in negative emotions."

WebMD Magazine online

### Benefits of Happiness



- Decreased susceptibility to infection
- Quicker recovery from illness
- · Increased longevity

World Happiness Report, 2013

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# Happiness (Subjective Well-being) Can Have a Positive Influence on Wellness and Health

- Improves functioning of cardiovascular, endocrine, and immune systems
- Lowers risk of heart disease and stroke World Happiness Report, 2013

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### Intentional Positive Activities Work

A study that combined results from 51 randomized controlled interventions found that people prompted to engage in positive intentional activities, such as thinking gratefully, optimistically, or mindfully, became significantly happier.

Sin & Lyubomirsky

# Research from the Harvard Business Review on Developing Leaders



"Managing energy, not time, is the key to high performance and personal renewal."

The Making of a Corporate Athlete

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# Optimism and Happiness Help Us Get the Best from our Brains



"In fact, when people experience happiness, they tend to have higher energy and lower tension. ... Optimal mood is associated with superior cognition and behavior in a variety of ways. Moods are barometers of our overall functioning."

Calm Energy: How People Regulate Mood with Food and Exercise

# Optimism is Good for Blood Pressure



Over a four-year period, highly pessimistic men were **3 times** more likely to develop hypertension than cheerier souls, even after other risk factors were taken into account.

Harvard Health Letter



# Overcoming Myths about Happiness

Myth:

Happiness is a frill.

Reality:

Happiness can be a key component in supporting positive relationships, career achievement, creativity, higher pay, health, and well-being.

Sonya Lyubomirsky

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# Overcoming Myths about Happiness

Myth:

As we get older, we become less positive.

Reality:

Many people become more positive as they age.

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# Overcoming Myths about Happiness

Myth:

"I will be happy when I (get the job promotion, get married, get a new car or boat, or increase in wealth)."

Reality:

Though changes in life circumstances are commonly believed to influence happiness over the long term, research suggests that after a brief increase, emotional levels return to the set-point.

Sonya Lyubomirsky

# Overcoming Myths about Happiness



Myth:
Happiness is all in the genes.
Reality:
Our genetic set-point
influences some 50% of our
levels of happiness;
life circumstances
influence 10%;
and some 40% is driven
by our intentional activity.

Sonya Lyubomirsky

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# New Understanding: Happiness is a Skill

When we think of happiness as a skill, it makes sense that the more we practice being happy, the more skilled we become.

In a sense we are wiring our brains with new skills and strategies of happiness.

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Strategies for
Sustaining or Increasing Levels of
Happiness

Some things to think about...

# Strategy: Arm Test and I Feel Good—Yes!

This strategy is used to illustrate the power of our thinking.

We have approximately 70,000 thoughts per day.

Through effort, each of us has the power to choose our thoughts.

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### Strategy: Savor the Wow of Now

Stop and appreciate the "oceanic feeling" of something in nature, art, music, or the company of friends and family, for example.

Be in the moment.

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# Strategy: Pursue FLOW

Learn a new skill,
find activities in which you become
fully immersed,
such as creating art, gardening,
playing an instrument, or
participating in a sport.

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# Strategy: Pursue a Purpose

Find a purpose that is meaningful for you and pursue measurable and achievable steps toward making progress.

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### Strategy: Kindness, the Killer App

Acts of kindness and giving to others through activities such as volunteering are powerful ways to sustain higher levels of happiness. And, for example, praising people and sending emails thanking others are effective ways to increasing happiness.



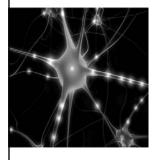
# Practice the Art of Treasuring



Be actively grateful and treasure your blessings daily. Some people find that keeping a journal of what you are grateful for is highly effective. Others like to share verbally with others.

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### Mirror Neurons



When we see someone do something, the same neurons they used are activated in our own brains.

### Strategy: Model a Positive Attitude





When we see someone do something, the same neurons they used are activated in our own brains.

Source: www.edge.org

# Mirror neurons are important.









Seeing a picture of someone showing disgust (top left) automatically triggers activation in the part of the observer's brain that reacts when they feel disgusted themselves (top right). And the more intense the expression they see (bottom left), the more active  $% \left( \frac{1}{2}\right) =\left( \frac{1}{2}\right) \left( \frac$ their brains (bottom right).

### Strategy: Maintain an Upbeat Attitude with Positive Self-Talk

Monitor and adjust your thoughts to keep the focus on what is useful and/or positive. "What is the most useful or positive thing I can do now?"

# Strategy: Marcus Conyers' Mother's Thirty-Second Strategy for Growing Optimism



- What were the best things that
- great things that will happen

# Strategy: Set Meaningful Learning Goals





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# Meaningful Goal Setting



For example, a group of teachers could set a goal for helping students to become more positive learners.

3. STRESS
MANAGEMENT
[ESPECIALLY FOR
TEACHERS]

TRANSPIRE PER

# Our CIA Model for Choosing Where to Invest Your Attention



- Control: Focus on what you can control (your own thoughts and actions).
- *Influence:* Identify areas where you can influence outcomes.
- Acknowledge: Aim to minimize the negative impact of areas outside of your control.

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# BrainSMART Health Wise Stress Management Strategies for Teachers

T.N.T. [The Next Time]

- Save the successes and build resilience.
- **Deal** with solvable problems right away (avoid the bee in the bonnet syndrome).
- **Delete** (rather than repeat) negative thoughts.
- T. N. T. focus on what to do differently The Next Time.

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# Strategy: The Coat Hanger

Sometimes we need to set our worries aside for awhile.

Find other ways to set aside your worries and stressors for awhile. For example, tai chi, meditation, and/or relaxation techniques.



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# 4. HARNESSING THE BENEFITS OF HEALTHY NUTRITION

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# Lifestyle Strategies Can Have a Significant Impact on Well-being



We can reduce stroke by 70%, type 2 diabetes by 90%, and heart disease by 80% compared to average rates in the US.

Walter Willett

# Strategy: Choose Your Food Choose Your Mood

- Protein
- Carbohydrate
- Dopamine
- Serotonin

Alert

Sleepy

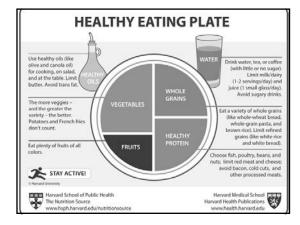
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# Avoid Excess Sugar



- U.S. Sugar Consumption
  - 200 years ago = 2 pounds
- 1970 = 123 pounds
- 2014 = almost 152 pounds
- 3 pounds (or 6 cups) of sugar consumed in one week!

http://www.dhhs.state.nh.us/dphs/ nhp/adults/documents/sugar.pdf



# Process: Smart Pegs



Experiment illustrating:

- Learning strategy
  [one of many strategies
  that help with transfer]
- Teaching strategy
  [can be used in life,
  meaningful for most
  educators, multiple
  pathways for learning,
  differentiated]

# **Smart Pegs**



Principles Used:

- Location
- Imagination
- Celebration

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# Smart Pegs: 10 Foods for Well-being

- Blueberries
- Frozen Yogurt
- Nuts
- Olive Oil
- Salmon
- Brown Rice
- Broccoli
- Spinach
- Bananas
- Tomatoes

### Strategy: Comparisons



Comparisons is a core cognitive strategy for developing well-being.

# Comparisons can be a matter of health or illness



- HDL "Healthy"
   Removes LDL and
   reduces risk of heart
   disease
- LDL "Lousy" Linked to increased risk of heart disease

# Comparisons Pizza

Pizza Hut Tossed Veggie Papa John's All Meats,

Lovers, 3 Slices

3 Slices

- Calories 550
- Calories 1,180
- Total Fat 14
- Total Fat 78
- Saturated Fat 6
- Saturated Fat 27



# Comparisons **Drinks**

Mineral Water 8 oz. Soda 8 oz.

•10 Teaspoons Sugar •Zero Sugar •150 Calories Zero Calories

1 1/2 Miles

# Comparisons Fast Foods

### Subway's 6-inch Sub **Cheese Fries with Ranch**

• 260 Calories

Dressing • 3,010 Calories

Zero Miles

- 5 Grams of Fat
- 1 Gram Saturated Fat 217 Grams Fat

  - 2.6 Miles
- 91 Grams Saturated Fat 30 Miles

# Sample Breakfast Foods



- Lean protein first!
- Low-fat yogurt
- Egg-white omelet
- Healthy carbs
- Veggies and fruits
- Whole grain bread
- Oatmeal

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samp	ıe	Luncn	Foods



- Nuts 20 minutes before lunch
- Lean protein
- Beans
- Fish or chicken
- Very lean red meat
- Healthy carbs
- Veggies and fruits
- Whole grains

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# Sample Supper Foods



- Healthy carbs first
- Whole grain pasta
- Brown rice
- Fruits and veggies
- Lean protein
- Fish, chicken, and lean red meat
- Beans and legumes

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# 5. AEROBIC AND STRENGTH TRAINING

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# Exercise and the Brain



A large study in Sweden found that levels of cardiovascular health in teen years predicted risk of dementia decades later.

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### **Exercise Stimulates BDNF**

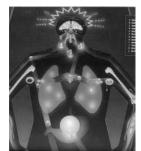


Brain-Derived Neurotrophic Factor

- BDNF is a molecule that encourages the creation of the new neurons and synapses that underpin learning.
- Walking 30 minutes a day five times a week stimulates production of BDNF.



# Strategy: Structured Movement



### BRAINOBICS

- SMART Cross
- SKY Cros
- KNEE Cross
- EAGLE Cross
- READING Eyes
- I FEEL Good!

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# Exercise Promotes Brain Health and Learning

Physical changes in the body produced by exercise enhance the brain's ability to learn because of:

- More oxygen in blood to the brain,
- Alterations to neurotransmitters and structural changes in the central nervous system, and
- Arousal of the senses to enhance engagement in and attention to the tasks of learning.

John Rate

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# Strategy: Strength Training



Strength training is one of the most effective ways for keeping the brain healthy.

### Move Your Body, Boost Your Mood

Exercise boosts brain chemicals that support happiness. Find what works for you and enjoy the body-brain benefits.

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# P.E. Improves Academic Performance



In Naperville, Illinois, struggling eighth-grade students who take P.E. before English read, on average, a half-year ahead of those who do not. Those who took gym class right before math posted large gains on standardized tests.

# Establishing Good Exercise Habits

Formal exercise programs at school can have a positive effect on student behavior, test scores, and well-being.

- One hour of physical activity a day is key for body and brain health.
- Physical exercise is *especially* important for the brain and cognitive function.

Research: Use movement to increase optimism, cognition, and achievement.
Smart moves: Powering up the brain with physical activity  Smart moves: Powering up the brain with physical activity  Smart moves: Powering up the brain with physical activity  Smart moves: Powering up the brain with physical activity  Smart moves: Powering up the brain with physical activity  Smart moves: Powering up the brain with physical come together to down the physical activity and physical activity have a pacific standard activity of the physical activity have a pacific standard activity of the physical activity have a pacific standard activity of the physical activity have a pacific standard activity of the physical activity have a pacific standard activity of the physical activity have a pacific standard activity of the physical activity have a pacific standard activity of the physical activity have a pacific standard activity of the physical activity have a pacific standard activity of the physical activity have a pacific standard activity of the physical activity have a pacific standard activity of the physical activity have a pacific standard activity of the physical activity have a pacific standard activity.  Active play and regular physical activity have a pacific standard activity active play active standard activity.  Active play active play active standard activity active standard activity active standard activity active standard activity.  Active play active standard activity active standard

6. SLEEP

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# Sleep 7 to 8 Hours are Optimal

- Supports learning
- Reduces stress
- Strengthens well-being

- Turn off electronics.
- Keep room dark.
- Establish a consistent sleep schedule.
- Avoid heavy meals before sleep.
- Apply other strategies shared earlier in presentation.

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# 7. CREATING POSITIVE CONNECTIONS

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Oxytocin has been called a bonding and relating (feelgood) chemical in the brain.

# Actively Cultivate Positive Relationships

Invest in creating positive relationships,
listening, and keeping in touch.

In turn, your increased level of happiness can
foster higher-quality relationships.

Ask: "What are some of the best things
that are happening for me?"

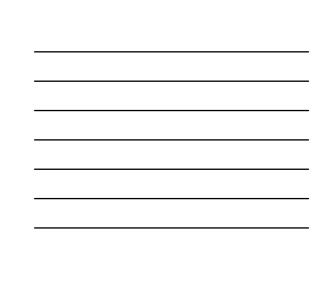
Emphasize positive topics in
interactions with others.

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# 8. OUR PEAK PROCESS FOR ADAPTING AND APPLYING WHAT WE ARE LEARNING

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# PEAK Model (Begin with Clear Intent) Execute Clan Assess Geep Making Progress (and Improving the Process)



# Sample of PEAK in Action

- Clear Intent: Create a positive motivating goal.
- P.lan: Develop a specific plan with "whenthen" elements for achieving it.
- E.xecute: Focus on completing action steps.
- A.ssess: Assess, monitor and adjust thoughts and actions.
- K.eep: Making progress (and improving the process). ... Aim for steady gains and be open to ways of improving the process.

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# Start with One or Two Strategies

To begin incorporating these strategies into your daily life, begin with a couple that appeal most to you and practice using them until they become part of your routine.

Then add other strategies to your "well-being regimen."

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# Objectives and Outcomes

- How the brain is the engine of well-being
- Nutrition and exercise: powering the brain for well-being
- Positive strategies for reducing stress

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# Reviewing: How to Get the Best from Your Body-Brain System and Support Well-being Through...

- 1. Lifelong learning: A fountain of youth (Congratulations for living this with us today!)
- The power of positive affect, optimism and happiness (Research on the benefits and a toolbox of practical strategies )
- 3. Stress management (Especially for teachers)
- 4. Harnessing the benefits of healthy nutrition
- 5. Aerobic and strength training
- 6. Sleep
- 7. Creating positive connections
- 8. Our PEAK Process for adapting and applying what we are learning today

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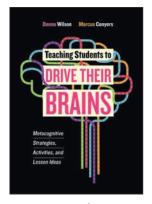
# All the Best on Your Journey!



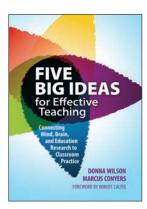
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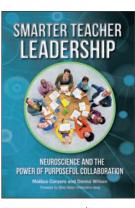
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	117002	Teaching Students to Drive Their Brains: Metacognitive Strategies, Activities, and Lesson Ideas	\$32.95
	TCP0676	Five Big Ideas for Effective Teaching: Connecting Mind, Brain and Education Research to Classroom Practice	\$32.95
	TCP4179	Smarter 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) \$	



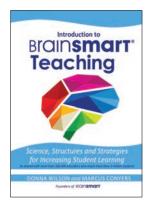




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