

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

www.hbconf.com.au

MARCUS CONYERS

FRIDAY 18 MAY

Session 3

**Unleashing the Power
of Teacher Wellbeing - Part 2**

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 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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KEY POINTS FROM DR MARCUS CONYERS'

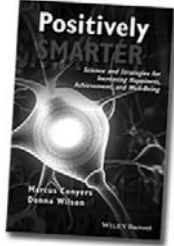
Unleashing the Power of Teacher Wellbeing

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.

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“The Brain Influences Everything, and Everything Influences the Brain”

Marcus Conyers



Graphic Adapted from Elaine Fletcher-Janzen

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

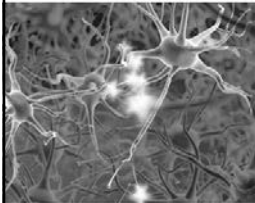
1. Lifelong learning: A fountain of youth (Congratulations for living this with us today!)
2. The power of positive affect, optimism, and happiness (Research on the benefits and a toolbox of practical strategies)
3. Stress management (Especially for teachers)
4. Harnessing the benefits of healthy nutrition
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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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

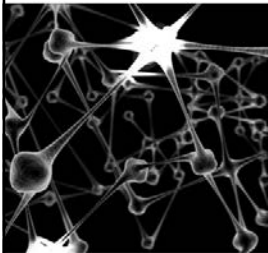


What Creates Connections?

- 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

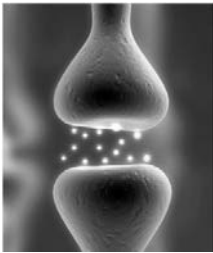
... then neurotransmitters that enable learning are released. Think of an "on" switch.

Michael Merzenich

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Experience-Dependent Synaptogenesis

Brain connections influenced by proper conditions for active learning and thinking

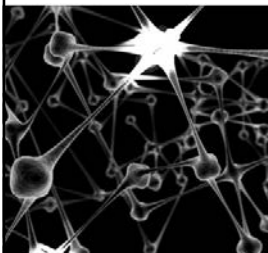


Experience-Dependent
Each human becomes different depending on their genetics *and* learning environment.

- Vocabulary development
- Health and wellness habits
- Playing a musical instrument

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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



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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)

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

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**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

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**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

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**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)."

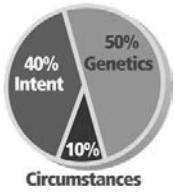
Reality:

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

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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...

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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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FLOW



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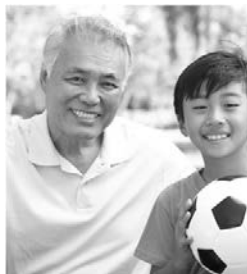
**Strategy:
Pursue a Purpose**

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 e-mails thanking others are effective ways to increasing happiness.



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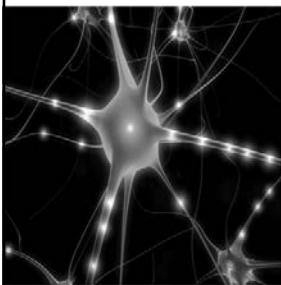
Practice the Art of Treasuring



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.

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Strategy: Model a Positive Attitude

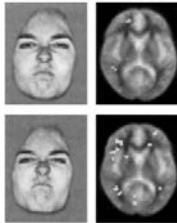


When we see someone do something, the same neurons they used are activated in our own brains.

Source: www.edge.org

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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 their brains (bottom right).

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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?”

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



- What were the best things that happened today?
- Look out for all the great things that will happen tomorrow!


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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.

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**3. STRESS
MANAGEMENT
[ESPECIALLY FOR
TEACHERS]**

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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.

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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


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Strategy: Choose Your Food Choose Your Mood

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protein • Dopamine <p style="text-align: center;">Alert</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carbohydrate • Serotonin <p style="text-align: center;">Sleepy</p>
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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>

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HEALTHY EATING PLATE

HEALTHY OILS

Use healthy oils (like olive and canola oil) for cooking, on salad, and at the table. Limit butter. Avoid trans fat.

WATER

Drink water, tea, or coffee (with little or no sugar). Limit milk/dairy (1-2 servings/day) and juice (1 small glass/day). Avoid sugary drinks.

VEGETABLES

The more veggies – and the greater the variety – the better. Potatoes and French fries don't count.

FRUITS

Eat plenty of fruits of all colors.

WHOLE GRAINS

Eat a variety of whole grains (like whole-wheat bread, whole-grain pasta, and brown rice). Limit refined grains (like white rice and white bread).

HEALTHY PROTEIN

Choose fish, poultry, beans, and nuts; limit red meat and cheese; avoid bacon, cold cuts, and other processed meats.

STAY ACTIVE!

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Harvard School of Public Health
The Nutrition Source
www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource

Harvard Medical School
Harvard Health Publications
www.health.harvard.edu

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]

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Smart Pegs



Principles Used:

- Location
- Imagination
- Celebration


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Smart Pegs: 10 Foods for Well-being

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

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Strategy: Comparisons



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

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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

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Comparisons

Pizza

Pizza Hut Tossed Veggie Lovers, 3 Slices	Papa John's All Meats, 3 Slices
• Calories 550	• Calories 1,180
• Total Fat 14	• Total Fat 78
• Saturated Fat 6	• Saturated Fat 27



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Comparisons Drinks

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------------|
| Soda 8 oz. | Mineral Water 8 oz. |
| •10 Teaspoons Sugar | •Zero Sugar |
| •150 Calories | •Zero Calories |
| 1 ½ Miles | Zero Miles |


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Comparisons Fast Foods

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Subway's 6-inch Sub | Cheese Fries with Ranch Dressing |
| • 260 Calories | • 3,010 Calories |
| • 5 Grams of Fat | • 217 Grams Fat |
| • 1 Gram Saturated Fat | • 91 Grams Saturated Fat |
| 2.6 Miles | 30 Miles |

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Sample Breakfast Foods

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

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Sample Lunch 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

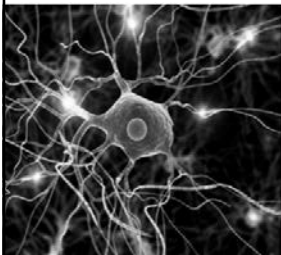
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Exercise and the Brain



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

Exercise Stimulates BDNF

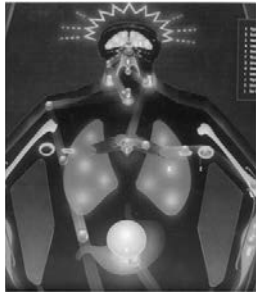


Brain-Derived Neurotrophic Factor

- 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 Cross
 - 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 Ratey

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Strategy: Strength Training



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

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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.

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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.

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Research:
**Use movement to increase optimism,
cognition, and achievement.**



<http://www.kappancommoncore.org/smart-moves-powering-up-the-brain-with-physical-activity/>

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6. SLEEP

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Sleep 7 to 8 Hours are Optimal

- Supports learning
- Reduces stress
- Strengthens well-being

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Strategies For Getting Enough Sleep

- 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 (feel-good) chemical in the brain.

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**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)**



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Sample of PEAK in Action

- Clear Intent: Create a positive motivating goal.
- P.lan: Develop a specific plan with “when-then” 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!)
2. 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
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8. Our PEAK Process for adapting and applying what we are learning today

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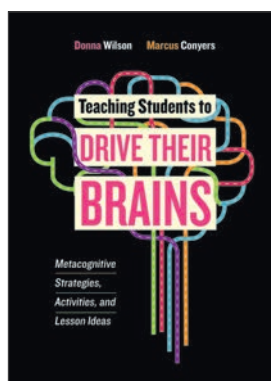
All the Best on Your Journey!



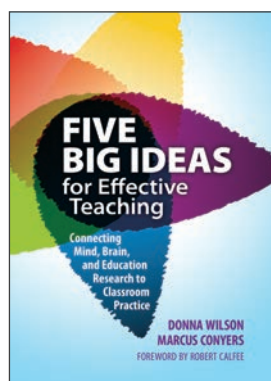
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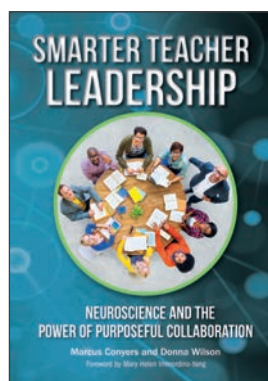
Qty	Code	Title	Price
	117002	Teaching Students to Drive Their Brains: Metacognitive Strategies, Activities, and Lesson Ideas	\$32.95
	TCP0676	Five Big Ideas for Effective Teaching: Connecting Mind, Brain and Education Research to Classroom Practice	\$32.95
	TCP4179	Smarter Teacher Leadership: Neuroscience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



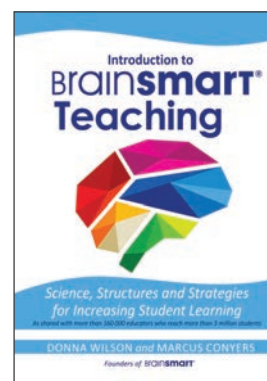
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