

**COURSE TITLE:** REASONS STUDENTS DON'T LIKE SCHOOL: Mind & Your Classroom  
**NO. OF CREDITS:** 6 QUARTER CREDITS  
[semester equivalent = 4.00 credits]  
**INSTRUCTOR:** Brenda McKinney  
bbbrain@comcast.net

**WA CLOCK HRS:** 60  
**OREGON PDUs:** 60  
**PENNSYLVANIA ACT 48:** 60

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Scientists now know so much more about how our students learn than they did thirty years ago and it is time to upgrade your learning. Did you know that our brains are not really designed for thinking? Did you know that most of what we learn is forgotten immediately? This book offers you the research and arguments to explain why and much, much more. All K-12 and university educators in all disciplines will benefit greatly from understanding the biological and cognitive basis for learning explained in this book. The nine principles are presented with clear, easy-to-understand applications for the classroom; the text is packed with strategies that will be useful in your classroom. If you are a teacher who is looking to increase your effectiveness, then this is the best teachers' guide around.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:** Upon completion of this course, participants will have:

1. Understood why people are curious but not naturally good thinkers.
2. Discovered the valuable role of factual knowledge and understanding what students know.
3. Developed a plan from a cognitive perspective that will consistently provide pleasure and success when solving problems.
4. Reflected on the concept that proficiency requires practice, repetition, and mastery over time.
5. Determined if learning styles and multiple intelligences are still a valuable tool for the classroom.
6. Discovered the new research about IQ what can be done to optimize environmental factors with genetic ones.
7. Reviewed teaching practices based on conscious effort and feedback.
8. Learned how to maximize time in the classroom based on focused and knowledgeable planning.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

Completion of all specified assignments is required for issuance of hours or credit. The Heritage Institute does not award partial credit. The use of artificial intelligence is not permitted. Assignment responses found to be generated by AI will not be accepted.

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**HOURS EARNED:**

Completing the basic assignments (Section A. Information Acquisition) for this course automatically earns participants their choice of CEUs (Continuing Education Units), Washington State Clock Hours, Oregon PDUs, or Pennsylvania ACT 48 Hours. The Heritage Institute offers CEUs and is an approved provider of Washington State Clock Hours, Oregon PDUs, and Pennsylvania ACT 48 Hours.

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**UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT INFORMATION**

**REQUIREMENTS FOR UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT**

Continuing Education Quarter credits are awarded by Antioch University Seattle (AUS). AUS requires 75% or better for credit at the 400 level and 85% or better to issue credit at the 500 level. These criteria refer both to the amount and quality of work submitted.

1. Completion of Information Acquisition assignments 30%
  2. Completion of Learning Application assignments 40%
  3. Completion of Integration Paper assignment 30%
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**CREDIT/NO CREDIT (No Letter Grades or Numeric Equivalents on Transcripts)**

Antioch University Seattle (AUS) Continuing Education Quarter credit is offered on a Credit/No Credit basis; neither letter grades nor numeric equivalents are on a transcript. 400 level credit is equal to a "C" or better, 500 level credit is equal to a "B" or better. This information is on the back of the transcript.

AUS Continuing Education quarter credits may or may not be accepted into degree programs. Prior to registering, determine with your district personnel, department head, or state education office the acceptability of these credits for your purpose.

## **ADDITIONAL COURSE INFORMATION**

### **REQUIRED TEXT**

Willingham, Daniel T. 2021. *Why Don't Students Like School?: A Cognitive Scientist Answers Questions About How the Mind Works and What It Means for the Classroom* 2nd Edition. NJ: Jossey Bass.

ISBN-13: 978-1119715665

New from \$13.99

None. All reading is online.

### **MATERIALS FEE**

Text, *Why Don't Students Like School?*, is approximately \$14 from Amazon.com.

## **ASSIGNMENTS REQUIRED FOR HOURS OR UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT**

### **A. INFORMATION ACQUISITION**

Assignments done in a course forum will show responses from all educators who have or are taking the course independently. Feel free to read and respond to others' comments.

Group participants can only view and respond to their group members in the Forum.

#### **Assignment #1: Introduction**

For those participating in Group Collaboration, you must read and follow the instructions outlined in the Group Collaboration Guidelines.

Click on the link for Guidelines. <https://www.hol.edu/about/group-collaboration>

- Assignment #1, each participant must complete this assignment independently.
- There should be a minimum of (4) four group meetings during which the course content is discussed.
- Teleconferences or live meetings are acceptable. A good videoconference option is Zoom (<https://zoom.us/>).
- Each participant must attend at least 75% of the group meetings (a minimum of 3 of 4 meetings).

You must complete your introduction before moving on to other assignments.

Introduce yourself in a 250+ word response.

- Describe your current professional situation, some low and high points in your teaching career and say why you chose this course.
- Write a short response about why you think students are struggling to engage with school and some immediate changes you would like to see happen in education.

#### **Assignment #2: Why Don't Students Like School?**

Read Chapter 1, pgs. 1-22, in your text, while taking advantage of the authentic examples about why the brain is not wired for thinking and how this hampers learning in the classroom.

- What did you learn from this reading about thinking and how you might reconsider ways to encourage students to think in to maximize their potential?
- Why is curiosity so fragile and what gives it staying power?
- Explain short term, working and long-term memory. What was new knowledge for you?
- Consider the implications for the classroom summarized at the end of your reading and what you can do to improve each of your students gets pleasure in learning.

In a 500+ word response discuss your learning, favorite examples from the text, and practical tools to bring to the classroom. Please share with at least two other people in forum concerning any of the topics.

### **Assignment #3: Teaching Kids The Skills They Need**

Read chapter two, pgs. 25-54, in your text to assess the conundrum of state testing and factual learning. Also pay special note to reading in all content areas.

Watch the video: Teaching Content is Teaching Reading

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/RiP-ijdxqEc>

Read the following article by Daniel Willingham. *Unlocking the Science of How Kids Think*.

<https://www.educationnext.org/unlocking-science-how-kids-think-new-proposal-for-reforming-teacher-education/>

In a 500+ word response share your learning while considering the following points from this chapter. Please respond to at least two others.

- Why is the idea of reading comprehension in all content areas so complex?
- What is the concept of chunking and how can you apply this cognitive strategy to the planning of your lessons?
- What are the four (4) principles behind background knowledge?
- What new learning can you bring to your classroom?

### **Assignment #4: Memory in the Classroom**

Read chapter three, pgs. 57-91, on “Why kids forget everything you say?” Use the chart included in the text to help guide your reading.

- What are the four (4) reasons why students remember some things and forget others?
- What are the factors that make learning work? (Emotions, repetition, purposeful attention and remembering)
- What are the things good teachers have in common (Hint: content organization, style, emotional bond with students)
- Why are stories considered “psychologically privileged”? What four principles (four “C’s”), make up story structure? How might you use this learning on story structure to improve your lesson design?
- What were your favorite examples that highlight and help you connect with the learning?

Create a memory chart or visual that will be helpful to you in the classroom. Make sure that you include all pertinent learning to why kids struggle with memory, why memory is so fragile, and why this might be a reason they disengage with school. Include your thoughts on tools you can use in the classroom.

### **Assignment #5: Understanding Abstract Ideas**

Read chapter four, pgs. 95-115, on why the mind does not care for abstractions.

- What helps students learn and comprehend innovative ideas? (Hint: analogies, prior knowledge, examples).
- What must every new idea encompass?
- Why is knowledge shallow and how do the levels of understanding complicate things even further in the classroom?
- What implications have the most meaning for you in your classroom?

In a 250+ word response discuss the profound implications about thinking, abstractions, and how to increase shallow knowledge, and why it is difficult to understand "stuff" and then transfer it to new learning situations.

Respond to at least two other people in forum. Share your ideas and difficulties.

### **Assignment #6: Pros and Cons of Drilling-Is It Worth It?**

Read chapter five, pgs. 119-139, in your text. You will have a chance to look at repetition, its role in learning, and whether drilling is worth it. This is a discussion vital for all teachers.

Watch the video: *How to use 'working memory' to your pupils' advantage*

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/mEOLYaocqQQ>

- Why is practice necessary to gain a minimum level of competency?
- Define working memory and discuss its limitations. What can YOU do to “cheat” this limitation? What is the “big” pay-off in working around these limitations?
- What can you do to extend the life of a memory? Since forgetting is rapid and most learning is lost, what will you change in your classroom to improve this?

- What are three (3) reasons to continue practicing mental skills and what are the implications for the classroom? What are the arguments against drilling and repetition?
- What are the implications for background knowledge, memory, and the brain?

In 500+ words discuss your learning of the elements of memory, repetition, and drilling. Be sure to include the implications for the classroom. How will you address immediate changes you can incorporate into the classroom?

Respond to at least two other students to share your learning and opinion on drilling and the benefits.

### **Assignment #7: Thinking Like an Expert**

Read chapter six, pgs. 167-189, in your text. You will have the chance to think about the thinking of this statement: "Cognition early in training is fundamentally different from cognition late in training".

Read Critical Thinking: Kids Can Do It (Sometimes), but Adults Often Fail at It

<https://medium.com/@MatthewOldridge/critical-thinking-kids-can-do-it-sometimes-but-adults-often-fail-at-it-1f838ea0091d>

In a 250-500+ word response discuss what you have learned about cognition, novices, experts, and ways to increase your own mental toolbox using the reading and the learning from your text.

Please respond to at least two others in forum.

- Consider the thinking that your students are not experts but novices.
- How should that impact the teaching and cognitive development of your subject? What needs to be in an expert's mental toolbox?
- What are ways to cheat the "limitations" to deal with unfamiliar information?
- How can you get students to think like experts in your subject matter? What are the implications for the classroom?

### **Assignment #8: Learning Styles-The Controversy**

Read chapter seven, pgs. 168-189, in your text. "Children are more alike than different in how they think." The challenge is presented to grapple with whether learning styles exist or not. This will provide the opportunity for you to upgrade your thinking.

Watch the following videos on learning styles:

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/slv9rz2NTUk>

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/IKkHiAA3xu0>

Choose a learning styles profile to take online (including VARK) and discuss your own personal profile and results.

Write a letter to your administration, a colleague, a trusted friend discussing the implications of this research on learning styles and what is critical to consider when teaching a lesson that is equitable for all learners.

### **Assignment #9: Helping Slow Learners**

Read chapter eight, pgs. 191-213, in your text. "Intelligence can be changed through hard sustained work." The pressing question of how to help slow learners or those students who do not like school is addressed in this reading.

Watch the video on Is Teaching an Art or a Science?

[https://www.youtube.com/embed/wJrqM7Rx\\_FY](https://www.youtube.com/embed/wJrqM7Rx_FY)

Create a Venn Diagram that includes the new learning from your reading and the video. Please address each of the following:

1. A section on what you are already doing in the classroom
2. Questions that you have after the new research has been presented.
3. List of things that will change in your classroom for slower students and those who struggle.

Please allow enough room to include all your thoughts and learning. Last, make sure to comment somewhere on the page of what has most impacted you. You may also address this issue in a 500+ word response if you prefer writing and analyzing.

Please respond to at least two others in forum.

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### Assignment #10: Role of the Teacher

Read chapter ten, pgs. 251-273, in your text. "Teaching like any cognitive skill must be practiced to be improved." Teachers make a difference and that means that we grow, improve, and change just like the kids. Enjoy discovering how you can feel even more empowered while becoming a better teacher working smarter, not harder.

Watch the video: *Teachers Make A Difference*

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/j-oqGy8zjrl>

Watch the video: *Be a Mr. Jensen*

[https://www.youtube.com/embed/4p5286T\\_kn0](https://www.youtube.com/embed/4p5286T_kn0)

- Develop a discussion with a colleague (s) focusing on strategies, research, science, examples from this course that would be of interest to all of them. Include the two videos and all other resources in your discussion.
- Have a list of questions to guide the conversation.
- Now focus on your own classroom. What ideas have been prompted by your new learning?

In a 250-500+ word response, share the discussion, follow-up, and your own evaluation of this discussion with your instructor.

### ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENTS REQUIRED FOR UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT

#### B. LEARNING APPLICATION

In this section, you will apply your learning to your professional situation. This course assumes that most participants are classroom teachers who have access to students. If you do not have a classroom available to you, please contact the instructor for course modifications. Assignments done in a course forum will show responses from all educators who have or are taking the course independently. ?Feel free to read and respond to others' comments. Group participants can only view and respond to their group members in the Forum.

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#### Assignment #11: Case History.

Write about one student who has been difficult for you to work with in the past and stands out in your mind. After you assess this student, then complete the following for the classroom.

Based on your learning from this course, *create* and *implement* a plan of action to address the students who don't like school issue in a new way. Incorporate your own learning from this course. This can be a student, classroom or a cluster of students.

- Consider creating three lists as you detail the plan of action. Memory, thinking, and educational practices.
- Create a chart or a series of lists that will be something you can use later in the classroom.
- As always pictures, graphics, creativity make the project more fun and meaningful.

#### Assignment #12: Lesson Development.

Complete one (1) of the following options:

##### Option A)

- Adapt a lesson to reflect what you've learned in this course.
- Implement your lesson with students in your classroom.
- Write a 250-500 word commentary on what worked well and what could be improved.
- Include any student feedback on your lesson.
- Share what you've learned with other teachers taking our courses by also contributing your Lesson to The Heritage Institute Lesson Library [www.hol.edu/lesson-plan-library](http://www.hol.edu/lesson-plan-library)
- You may download a copy of THI's lesson plan template [www.hol.edu/about/lesson-template](http://www.hol.edu/about/lesson-template)

OR

**Option B)**

Use this option if you do not have a classroom available.

- Adapt a lesson to reflect what you've learned in this course. (Do not implement it.)
- Share what you've learned with other teachers taking our courses by contributing your Lesson to The Heritage Institute Lesson Library <https://www.hol.edu/lesson-plan-library>
- You may download a copy of THI's lesson plan template <https://www.hol.edu/about/lesson-template/>
- Write a 500+ word article concerning any noteworthy success you've had as a teacher with one or more students.
- Please refer to the guidelines on our blog [What Works: Teaching at its Best](https://www.hol.edu/blog) prior to writing your article. <https://www.hol.edu/blog>
- When you submit your article to your instructor, please also email a copy to [Renee Leon](mailto:renee@hol.edu) THI blog curator and media specialist. (renee@hol.edu)
- Indicate whether or not you are OK with having your article considered for publishing on our website.
- Submit your modified lesson and your article along with your article via email to your instructor.

In a 250+ word response detail the lesson plan, the specifics, and if you are willing me sure to upload on the Heritage site.

**Assignment #13: (500 Level ONLY)**

In addition to the 400 level assignments, complete **one (1)** of the following assignment options:

**Option A)**

Prepare a 20-minute presentation, for colleagues or another group, highlighting techniques that you have learned from this course.

- The presentation can be in the form of a PowerPoint or other design with instructor's approval.
- Include a copy of any handout(s) you will use.
- PPT must be 12-15 slides, use graphics, pictures, bibliography, appropriate font siz

OR

**Option B)**

Another assignment of your own design with prior approval of the instructor.

Post your response, your PPT, your creative project to instructor. If it is too large, email to me at [bbbrain@comcast.net](mailto:bbbrain@comcast.net).

**C. INTEGRATION PAPER**

Assignment #14: (Required for 400 and 500 Level)

**SELF REFLECTION & INTEGRATION PAPER**

**(Please do not write this paper until you've completed all of your other assignments)**

Write a 400-500 word Integration Paper answering these 5 questions:

1. What did you learn vs. what you expected to learn from this course?
  2. What aspects of the course were most helpful and why?
  3. What further knowledge and skills in this general area do you feel you need?
  4. How, when and where will you use what you have learned?
  5. How and with what other school or community members might you share what you learned?
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**INSTRUCTOR COMMENTS ON YOUR WORK:**

Instructors will comment on each assignment. If you do not hear from the instructor within a few days of posting your assignment, please get in touch with them immediately.

**QUALIFICATIONS FOR TEACHING THIS COURSE:**

Brenda McKinney, CEO of Vancouver, WA based BrainVolution, is a developer and dynamic facilitator of workshops that teach practical thinking and learning tools for raising student achievement with the brain in mind. She has trained educators throughout the Pacific Northwest and is a popular presenter because of her ability to motivate, make things fun, and teach practical techniques for the classroom that can be used immediately. Brenda continues to read hundreds of books and articles on the subject of neuroscience and searches for the answer to success for every student. Her work with at-risk students and those with reading problems have made her a popular speaker at the state, regional and national level.

Brenda is able to synthesize the new research and continues to address the role of how to use the latest findings to create high achievement classroom. She brings 30+ years of experience at the elementary, middle school, high school and university level as a mentor teacher, consultant, motivational speaker, university instructor, and reading specialist. Brenda has her Master's in Education from Washington State University and is nationally certified in Brain Based Learning through the renowned Jensen Corporation, led by Eric Jensen, a noted international spokesperson for neuroscience and education.

Brenda will inspire and motivate you with her energy, enthusiasm and knowledge. Her wisdom, techniques, and brain based approach to education will inspire you and challenge you to meet the demands of this ever changing world.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### REASONS STUDENTS DON'T LIKE SCHOOL: Mind & Your Classroom

**Foer, Joshua.** *Moonwalking with Einstein: The Art and Science of Remembering Everything.* New York: NY. The Penguin Press. 2001. ISBN 1-101-46763-0.

This book draws on cutting-edge research, a surprising cultural history of memory, and venerable tricks of the mentalist's trade to transform our understanding of human remembering. Using methods that have been largely forgotten, Foer discovers that we can all dramatically improve our memories. Foer learns to apply techniques that call on imagination as much as determination—showing that memorization can be anything but rote.

**Heath, Chip and Dan.** *Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die.* New York: NY. Random House. 285 pages. 2008. ISBN-13: 978-1-4000-6428-1

Why do some ideas thrive while others die? And how do we improve the chances of worthy ideas? In *Made to Stick*, accomplished educators and idea collectors Chip and Dan Heath tackle head-on these vexing questions. Inside, the brothers Heath reveal the anatomy of ideas that stick and explain ways to make ideas stickier, such as applying the “human scale principle,” using the “Velcro Theory of Memory,” and creating “curiosity gaps.”

*Made to Stick* is a book that will transform the way you communicate ideas. *Made to Stick* shows us the vital principles of winning ideas—and tells us how we can apply these rules to making our own messages.

**Johnson, LouAnne.** *Teaching Outside The Box; How To Grab Your Students By Their Brains.* San Francisco, CA. Jossey-Bass. 320 pages. 2011. ISBN-10: 0470903740. Johnson is the author of The New York Times bestseller *Dangerous Minds* (originally *My Posse Don't Do Homework*) and her writing is fun to read and has lots of tools you will want to have. It includes some great engaging questions for reflection at the end of each chapter. I love this book and you will too!

**Medina, John.** *Brain Rules.* Seattle, WA. Pear Press. 285 pages. 2009. ISBN-10: 0-9797777-0-4. In *Brain Rules*, Dr. John Medina, a molecular biologist, shares his lifelong interest in how the brain sciences might influence the way we teach our children and the way we work. In each chapter, he describes a brain rule—what scientists know for sure about how our brains work—and then offers transformative ideas for our daily lives. Medina's fascinating stories and infectious sense of humor breathe life into brain science. In the end, you'll understand how your brain really works—and how to get the most out of it.

**Schacter, Daniel.** *The Seven Sins of Memory: How the Mind Forgets and Remembers.* Houghton Mifflin. 2001. 250 pages. ISBN-0-618-04019-6. A groundbreaking work by one of the world's foremost memory experts. In this intriguing study, Daniel L. Schacter explores the memory miscues that occur in everyday life: absent-mindedness, transience, blocking, misattribution, suggestibility, bias, and persistence. Schacter illustrates these concepts with vivid examples -- case studies, literary excerpts, experimental evidence, and accounts of highly visible news events such as the O.J. Simpson verdict, Bill Clinton's grand jury testimony, and the search for the Oklahoma City bomber. He also delves into striking new scientific research, giving us a glimpse of the fascinating neurology of memory. Together, the stories and the scientific results provide a new look at our brains and at what we more generally think of as our minds.