

TEACHING SOCIAL BRAINS: APPLYING SCIENCE TO IMPROVE SOCIAL SKILLS, BELONGING, BEHAVIOR, REGULATION, AND LEARNING

FEBRUARY 12-14, 2027 • SAN FRANCISCO, CA

Held at the historic Fairmont San Francisco Hotel



FEATURED SPEAKER: MICHELLE GARCIA WINNER, MA, CCC-SLP

Founder and CEO, Social Thinking; Author, *Why Teach Social Thinking?* (2014), *Socially Curious and Curiously Social* (2011), and *Think Social* (2006); Co-Author, *You Are a Social Detective!: Explaining Social Thinking to Kids* (2020, 2nd Edition) and *Superflex ... A Superhero Social Thinking Curriculum* (2008)



FEATURED SPEAKER: GEOFFREY L. COHEN, PHD

Professor of Psychology, [Stanford University](#); Professor of Education, [Stanford Graduate School of Education](#); Author, *Belonging: The Science of Creating Connection and Bridging Divides* (2022); Co-Author, "A Meta-analysis of the Effect of Values Affirmation on Academic Achievement" (2021, *Social Issues*)



FEATURED SPEAKER: MARC A. BRACKETT, PHD

Founding Director, Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence; Professor, Child Study Center, [Yale University](#); Author, *Dealing With Feeling: Use Your Emotions to Create the Life You Want* (2025) and *Permission to Feel: Unlocking the Power of Emotions to Help Our Kids, Ourselves, and Our Society Thrive* (2019)

FUTURE-PROOF BRAINS: TEACHING THINKERS, INNOVATORS, CREATORS, DREAMERS, AND LEADERS FOR A WORLD BEYOND AI

APRIL 15-17, 2027 • NEW YORK, NY

Held at the Sheraton New York Times Square Hotel



FEATURED SPEAKER: BARBARA A. OAKLEY, PHD, PE

Distinguished Professor of Engineering, [Oakland University](#); Author, *Mindshifts* (2017) and *A Mind for Numbers* (2014); Co-Author, "The Memory Paradox: Why Our Brains Need Knowledge in an Age of AI" (2025, *arXiv*), *Learn Like a Pro* (2021), *Uncommon Sense Teaching* (2021), and *Learning How to Learn* (2018)



FEATURED SPEAKER: ERIC C. SHENINGER, MED

CEO, Aspire Change EDU; Author, "Future-Proofing Learning: Preparing Students for an Uncertain Tomorrow" (2025, *A Principal's Reflections*) and *Disruptive Thinking in Our Classroom: Preparing Learners for Their Future* (2021); Co-Author, *Personalize: Meeting the Needs of All Students* (2025)



FEATURED SPEAKER: HANNAH M. CRITCHLOW, PHD

Fellow, Magdalene College, [University of Cambridge](#); Author, *The 21st Century Brain: How to Future-Proof Your Mind in the Age of AI* (2026), *Joined Up Thinking: The Science of Collective Intelligence and Its Power to Change Our Lives* (2022), and *The Science of Fate* (2019)

See LearningAndTheBrain.com for more information.

REGISTER NOW FOR OUR 2026-2027 WEBINAR SERIES



LEARNING & the BRAIN® is offering a series of LIVE webinars on Saturday mornings this fall and in 2027 on a variety of topics, such as the science of learning, executive function, engagement, AI, reading, and math.

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For more details, visit LearningAndTheBrain.com/subscription-pd or sign-up as an individual member when you register for the conference and save.

TEACHING MOTIVATED AND ENGAGED STUDENTS

How can educators inspire students to become more motivated learners during an age of declining interest in school? A 2025 Brookings Institution report, *The Disengagement Gap*, found that while 73% of third graders say they love school, that number falls to 42% by sixth grade and just 26% by tenth grade. Only 29% of tenth graders report learning things that matter in everyday life, and just 39% say they feel they belong at school. Yet, research shows that students are more motivated when learning is meaningful, relevant, challenging, and connected to their goals, interests, values, and sense of purpose. **This interdisciplinary conference will bring together experts to explore the “Science of Student Motivation” and the research connecting motivation with mindsets and beliefs, mastery, autonomy, belonging, relevance, meaning, metacognition, and desirable difficulties. Learn evidence-based strategies to boost mastery and metacognition skills; empower agency through student voice and choice; strengthen a sense of belonging and purpose; promote deeper, more meaningful learning; and develop effective teaching and classroom practices.**

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

You will gain knowledge about:

- ✓ The science of student motivation
- ✓ Evidence-based strategies for effective teaching
- ✓ How mindsets and beliefs shape student achievement
- ✓ The importance of metacognition and meaning for learning
- ✓ Strategies and feedback to promote mastery and competency
- ✓ Creating purposeful, meaningful, relevant learning experiences
- ✓ The role of relationships, values, and interest on engagement
- ✓ Empowering student agency, autonomy, voice, and choice
- ✓ Using cognitive rigor and competency-based education
- ✓ Mindset beliefs on reading and learning



This hybrid conference will include both a live, in-person audience as well as a virtual option using Zoom. You can choose to travel and see the sights of Austin or watch the sessions comfortably from your home, or your hotel room. All talks will be recorded and made available to stream for 45 days afterwards. **For more information, visit LearningAndTheBrain.com or call 857-444-1500 x1.*

CO-SPONSORS

- Texas Behavioral Science and Policy Institute
The University of Texas at Austin
- Strategic Learning and Motivational Beliefs Lab
The University of Texas at Austin
- The Neuro-Education Initiative
Johns Hopkins Graduate School of Education
- American Psychological Association (APA)**
- School Development Program
Yale University
- National Association of Elementary School Principals (**NAESP**)
- National Principals Association (**NPA**)
- LEARNING & the BRAIN® Foundation**

WHO SHOULD ATTEND

- Educators, Parents
- Curriculum, Staff Developers
- Speech-Language Pathologists
- PreK-12 Teachers, Administrators
- Psychologists, School Psychologists
- Learning Specialists, Special Educators
- Early Childhood Educators, Professionals
- Teen, Reading, Math, and STEM Teachers
- Academic, Motivation, and Mindset Coaches
- School Social Workers, School Counselors
- Superintendents, Principals, School Heads
- Schools of Education, Teacher Leaders
- College, University Professors

EARN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CREDIT

Professional Development Credit: Earn up to 18 hours of professional development credit for educators, psychologists, speech-language professionals, and social workers for either in-person or online instruction. Visit LearningAndTheBrain.com for more information on the availability of CEUs, PDPs, CEs, and other professional development credit, or call (857) 444-1500 x1.

Speech-Language Pathologist Credits: Visit LearningAndTheBrain.com for more information on courses registered to offer ASHA CEUs.



STAY AT THE HILTON AUSTIN – SPECIAL RATES



Pay only \$289 per night (plus applicable taxes) for a room with a King bed or Two Queen beds. Call the Hilton Austin Hotel (the site of the conference) at 1-800-HILTONS (1-800-445-8667), and reference “LEARNING & the BRAIN®” or book online via LearningAndTheBrain.com. The discounted conference rate will no longer apply when the room block is filled or after October 20, 2026. The hotel is centrally located in Austin and close to both Sixth Street and Rainey Street where you can find a wide variety of restaurants and enjoy Austin’s live music scene.



HYBRID LEARNING & the BRAIN® CONFERENCE

75TH International Conference for PreK Through University Educators, Clinicians, and Parents
November 12-14, 2026 • At the Hilton Austin in **Austin, TX** • Or Virtually from Home

Presented by:
Educator Resources, Inc.
78 Brooks Road
New Canaan, CT 06840



FEATURED SPEAKER:

Wendy S. Grolnick, PhD

Professor Emerita, *Clark University*;

Author, *Motivation Myth Busters*;

Science-Based Strategies to Boost

Motivation in Yourself and Others (2024)

TEACHING MOTIVATED MINDS: APPLYING BRAIN SCIENCE TO BOOST MASTERY, MOTIVATION, MINDSETS, METACOGNITION, AND LEARNING

Explore the latest research on:

The Science of Motivation

Growth Mindset and Beliefs

Metacognition and Achievement

Effective Evidence-Based Teaching

Boosting Mastery and Competency

Meaningful, Purposeful Learning

Relationships and Engagement

Autonomy, Voice, and Choice

Rekindling the Love for Learning

Effective Classroom Strategies

The Power of Teachers to Motivate

Reading, Mindsets, and Intervention

Why Teachers Matter in an AI Age

Common Myths About Motivation

Mindsets, Motivation, and STEM

Moving From Beliefs to Action

EARN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CREDIT AT THIS HYBRID CONFERENCE

UPCOMING 2027 LEARNING & the BRAIN CONFERENCES:

Winter - San Francisco, CA: Feb. 12-14, 2027

Spring - New York, NY: April 15-17, 2027

For information on upcoming conferences, available PD credit, and in-service PD options, see inside or visit [LearningAndTheBrain.com](https://www.learningandthebrain.com).

"To motivate ourselves and others, optimally, we need to understand people's psychological needs and learn how to tap into inner motivational resources, such as values, interests, and relationships."

—Wendy S. Grolnick, PhD
Clark University



TEACHING MOTIVATED MINDS: APPLYING BRAIN SCIENCE TO BOOST MASTERY, MOTIVATION, MINDSETS, METACOGNITION, AND LEARNING

AT THE HILTON AUSTIN IN AUSTIN, TX, OR VIRTUALLY
FROM YOUR HOME

NOVEMBER 12-14, 2026

Pre-Conference Workshops: November 12

Early Registration Deadline: September 25



FALL HYBRID LEARNING & the BRAIN® CONFERENCE

CONFERENCE PROGRAM TOPICS

WITH A DISTINGUISHED FACULTY

1) MOTIVATED MINDS: CHANGING BELIEFS & MINDSETS FOR ACHIEVEMENT



Keynote: Motivation and Myth:

Science-Based Strategies to Boost Motivation in Yourself and Your Students

Wendy S. Grolnick, PhD, Professor Emerita and Senior Research Scientist, [Clark University](#); Author, *Motivation Myth Busters: Science-Based Strategies to Boost Motivation in Yourself and Others* (2024), *Pressured Parents, Stressed-Out Kids: Dealing with Competition While Raising a Successful Child* (2008), and *The Psychology of Parental Control* (2002)



Keynote: Rekindle Your Child's Motivation

Ellen B. Braaten, PhD, Associate Professor of Psychology, [Harvard Medical School](#); Executive Director, Learning and Emotional Assessment Program (LEAP), Massachusetts General Hospital; Co-Director, Clay Center for Healthy Young Minds; Author, *Bright Kids Who Couldn't Care Less: How to Rekindle Your Child's Motivation* (2023); Co-Author, *The Motivation Mindset Workbook* (2025)

Mindsets and Identities to Empower Student Learning

Veronica X. Yan, PhD, Assistant Professor of Educational Psychology, [The University of Texas at Austin](#); Fellow, Mind and Society Center, [University of Southern California](#); Recipient of the "Rising Star" Award from the Association for Psychological Science; Co-Author, "Becoming Better Learners, Becoming Better Teachers: Augmenting Learning via Cognitive and Motivational Theories" (2023, *Human Arenas*)

Recent Advances in Situated Expectancy-Value Theory and Their Implications for Education in the AI Age

Allan L. Wigfield, PhD, Professor Emeritus, Department of Human Development, [University of Maryland](#); Honorary Professor of Psychology, [University of Heidelberg](#); K-CLUB Adjunct Faculty, Department of Education, Brain and Motivation Research Institute, [Korea University](#); Co-Author, *Motivation, Achievement, and Situated Expectancy-Value Theory* (2026) and "'Can (A) Do This Task?': The Role of AI as a Socializer of Students' Self-Beliefs of Their Abilities" (2025, *Learning and Individual Differences*)

From Beliefs to Action: Making Growth Mindset Visible to Students

Katherine M. Muenks, PhD, Associate Professor of Educational Psychology and Louise Spencer Griffith Fellow for Excellence, [The University of Texas at Austin](#); Principal Investigator, Learning and Motivational Beliefs Lab; Co-Author, "From Belief to Action: Making Growth Mindset Visible to Students" (2025, *Society for Personality and Social Psychology*) and "Instructor Mindset Beliefs and Behaviors" (2024, *Social Psychology of Education*)

Developing Growth Mindset Thinking in the Classroom

Mary Cay Ricci, MEd, Consultant; Former Faculty Associate, [Johns Hopkins School of Education](#); Author, *Mindsets in the Classroom: Building a Growth Mindset Learning Community* (2024, 3rd Edition), *Mindsets for Parents* (2023, 2nd Edition), *Nothing You Can't Do!: The Secret Power of Growth Mindsets* (2018), *Create a Growth Mindset School* (2018), and *Ready-to-Use Resources for Mindsets in the Classroom* (2020, 2nd Edition)

Integrating Evidence-Based Instruction and Growth Mindset Practices for Effective Intervention for Struggling Readers

Sharon R. Vaughn, PhD, Director, Reading and Dropout Prevention Institute; Executive Director, Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk; Professor, Department of Special Education; Principal Investigator, i-SMART: Intervention to Support Mindsets and Reading Together, [The University of Texas at Austin](#); Co-Author, *Strategies for Teaching Students With Learning and Behavior Disabilities* (2024, 11th Edition)

2) METACOGNITIVE MINDS: TEACHING STUDENTS HOW TO LEARN & REFLECT



Keynote: Breaking Bad (Habits):

Catalyzing Metacognition and Effective Strategies for Better Learning

Regan A. R. Gurung, PhD, Social Psychologist; Professor of Psychology, School of Psychological Science, [Oregon State University](#); Recipient of Oregon State University's highest teaching honor, the Elizabeth P. Ritchie "Distinguished Professor" Award in 2024; Co-Author, *Teach Like a Champ: The Psychology-Based Guide to Effective and Efficient Teaching* (2026) and *Study Like a Champ: The Psychology-Based Guide to "Grade A" Study Habits* (2023)



Keynote: Motivation + Metacognition

Bradley K. Busch, MSc, Chartered Psychologist with the British Psychological Society; Chief Psychological Officer, InnerDrive; Former Lecturer, [The Open University](#); Co-Author, *Evidence-Informed Wisdom: Making Better Decisions in Education* (2025), *Teaching and Learning Illuminated* (2023), and *The Science of Learning: 99 Studies That Every Teacher Needs to Know* (2021)

How Strategic Mindsets Promote and Predict Metacognition and Effective Teaching and Learning

Patricia Chen, PhD, Assistant Professor, Department of Educational Psychology, College of Education; Director, Motivation and Self-Regulation Lab, [The University of Texas at Austin](#); Co-Author, "A Strategic Mindset Predicts and Promotes Effective Learning and Academic Performance" (2025, *Science of Learning*) and "A Teacher Strategic Mindset Predicts Efficacious and Effective Teaching" (2023, *Educational Psychology*)

Metacognition and Retrieval Practice

Andrew C. Watson, MEd, Classroom Teacher; Founder/President of Translate the Brain, a professional development consultancy; Author, *The Goldilocks Map: A Classroom Teacher's Quest to Evaluate 'Brain-Based' Teaching Advice* (2021), *Learning Grows: The Science of Motivation for the Classroom Teacher* (2019), and *Learning Begins: A Teacher's Guide to the Learning Brain* (2017); Blogger, "Learning & the Brain" Blog



CONFERENCE BEGINS AT 12:00 PM, NOVEMBER 12

All times are Central Standard Time.



3) MASTERED MINDS: BOOSTING MASTERY & COMPETENCY SKILLS



Keynote: The Human Check: Why Short Oral Vivas Are the Secret Engine of True Mastery

Jonathan H. Bergmann, MA, Science Teacher and Staff Developer for AI-Infused Mastery Learning, Houston Christian High School; Educational Consultant, Flipped Learning LLC; Author, *The Mastery Learning Handbook: A Competency-Based Approach to Student Achievement* (2022); Co-Author, *Flipped Learning for Elementary Instruction* (2016)

Developing Practical and Effective Feedback Systems With Mastery Learning

Thomas R. Guskey, PhD, Professor Emeritus of Educational Psychology, College of Education, [University of Kentucky](#); Author, *Implementing Mastery Learning* (2022); Co-Author, *Grading With Integrity* (2024), *Get Set, Go!: Creating Successful Grading and Reporting Systems* (2020), and *On Your Mark: Challenging the Conventions of Grading and Reporting* (2014)

Deeper Competency-Based Learning Through Performance-Based Pathways

Karin J. Hess, EdD, President, Educational Research in Action, LLC; Author, *Rigor by Design, Not Chance: Deeper Thinking Through Actionable Instruction and Assessment* (2023); Co-Author, *Applying Depth of Knowledge and Cognitive Rigor: An Educator's Guide to Supporting Deeper Learning* (2025) and *Deeper Competency-Based Learning: Making Equitable, Student-Centered, Sustainable Shifts* (2020)

Mastering Learning: Building Student Confidence and Competence

Zach Groshell, PhD, Distinguished Teacher; Instructional Coach; Contributor, InnerDrive CPD Academy; Director, Education Rickshaw; Educational Consultant in the science of learning, who is currently working with the Alpha School in Austin, TX; Host, "Progressively Incorrect" Podcast and "The Direct Instruction" Podcast; Author, *Just Tell Them: The Power of Explanations and Explicit Teaching* (2024); Contributor, *Amplify Learning: A Global Collaborative: Amplifying Instructional Design* (2022)

4) ENGAGED LEARNERS: STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE TEACHING & LEARNING



Keynote: Visible Teaching: A Reframing of "Visible Learning" and a Call to Arms

David B. Daniel, PhD, Professor Emeritus of Psychology, [James Madison University](#); Recognized in the "Top 1% of Educational Researchers Influencing Public Debate" in the US; Co-Author, "Toward an Ecological Science of Teaching" (2021, *Canadian Psychology*) and "Educational Neuroscience: Are We There Yet?" (2019, *Wiley Handbook on Education*); Host, "L&B Podcast"

Teach Like a Champ: A Psychology-Based Guide to Effective and Efficient Teaching

Regan A. R. Gurung, PhD, Social Psychologist; Professor of Psychology, School of Psychological Science, [Oregon State University](#); Founding Editor, APA's *Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Psychology Journal*; Recipient of Oregon State University's highest teaching honor, the Elizabeth P. Ritchie "Distinguished Professor" Award in 2024; Co-Author, *Teach Like a Champ: The Psychology-Based Guide to Effective and Efficient Teaching* (2026) and *Study Like a Champ: The Psychology-Based Guide to "Grade A" Study Habits* (2023)

The Cognitive Challenges of Effective Teaching: Student Mental Mindsets, Beliefs, and Mistrust

Stephen L. Chew, PhD, Professor of Psychology, Howard College of Arts and Sciences, [Samford University](#); Chair, National Institute on the Teaching of Psychology; Carnegie Scholar; Author, "What Counts as Evidence of Effective Teaching" (2022, *The Teaching Professor*); Co-Author, "The Cognitive Challenges of Effective Teaching" (2020, *Economic Education*) and "The Cognitive Principles of Effective Teaching" (2015, APA)

The Science of Effective Learning and Memory

Bradley K. Busch, MSc, Chartered Psychologist with the British Psychological Society; Director, InnerDrive; Former Associate Lecturer, [The Open University](#); Co-Author, *Evidence-Informed Wisdom: Making Better Decisions in Education* (2025), *Teaching and Learning Illuminated* (2023), and *The Science of Learning: 99 Studies That Every Teacher Needs to Know* (2021)

Grading and Reporting Student Learning: Effective Policies and Practices

Thomas R. Guskey, PhD, Professor Emeritus of Educational Psychology, College of Education, [University of Kentucky](#); Author, *Implementing Mastery Learning* (2022); Co-Author, *Grading With Integrity* (2024), *Get Set, Go!: Creating Successful Grading and Reporting Systems* (2020), and *On Your Mark: Challenging the Conventions of Grading and Reporting* (2014)

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE:	Pre-Conference Workshops	Thursday, November 12	8:00 AM – 11:00 AM
	Conference Day 1	Thursday, November 12	12:00 PM – 5:00 PM
	Conference Day 2	Friday, November 13	8:30 AM – 5:30 PM
	Conference Day 3	Saturday, November 14	8:30 AM – 2:30 PM

5) EMPOWERING MINDS: USING AGENCY, CONNECTIONS, CHOICE, & VOICE



Keynote: Just Do This: Create a More Engaging and Inspiring School Culture
Steven A. Bollar, MA, K-12 Climate and Culture Specialist, Stand Tall Enterprises, LLC; Former Adjunct Professor, [Rutgers University](#); Consultant, New York State Education Department; Member, New Jersey Association of School Administrators; Author, *Just Do This...The Educator's Guide to Improve Culture and Climate in the Classroom, School, District* (2025)

The Science of Motivation: Connecting Relationships, Competence, and Autonomy

Cynthia L. Nebel, PhD, Associate Professor of Psychiatry; Director of Learning Services, [St. Louis University School of Medicine](#); Author "Help Students Believe in Themselves: Self-Efficacy Boosts Exam Scores" (2022, *The Learning Scientists*) and "Considerations for Applying Six Strategies for Effective Learning to Instruction" (2020, *Medical Science Educator*); Co-Author, *Ace That Test* (2023)

Voices and Choices:

Practical Applications of Self-Determination Theory to Help Both Teachers and Students Thrive

Michele Gregoire Gill, PhD, Professor, Educational Psychology, Learning Sciences, and Educational Research Department, [University of Central Florida](#); Founder, Board Chair, Galileo School for Gifted Learning; Author, *Millennials' Guide to K-12 Education: What No One Ever Told You About How to Help Your Child THRIVE in School* (2021); Co-Editor, *International Handbook of Research on Teachers' Beliefs* (2026, 2nd Edition)

Sparking Student Motivation: The Power of Teachers to Rekindle the Love for Learning

Eric M. Anderman, PhD, Vice Provost for Regional Campuses, Office of Academic Affairs; Professor, Educational Psychology, [Ohio State University](#); Author, *Sparking Student Motivation: The Power of Teachers to Rekindle a Love for Learning* (2020); Co-Author, "Deeper Learning and Motivation: Striving for Mastery" (2021, *Educational Leadership*) and *Classroom Motivation* (2020, 3rd Edition)

The Architecture of Motivation: Why Teachers Matter in the Age of AI

Micah D. Gottlieb, MEd, Associate Director of Child and Adolescent Applied Psychology, American Psychological Association (APA); Former Principal; Certified in Google AI Essentials, Learning Experience Design from [Oregon State University](#), and Redesigning High Schools for Improved Instruction from the [Harvard Graduate School of Education](#); Author, "Strengthening Student and Educator Well Being" (2026, APA)

Getting Them to Eat Peas When All They Want Is Ice Cream: Student Autonomy, Agency, and Adversity

John T. Almarode, PhD, Professor of Education, College of Education, [James Madison University](#); Co-Author, *The Teacher Clarity Playbook, Grades K-12* (2024), *How Tutoring Works: Six Steps to Grow Motivation and Accelerate Student Learning* (2021), *How Learning Works* (2021), *Visible Learning for Science* (2017), and *Captivate, Activate, and Invigorate the Student Brain in Science and Math, Grades 6–12* (2013)

6) MEANINGFUL MINDS: THE POWER OF PURPOSEFUL, RELEVANT LEARNING



Keynote: The Power of Meaning to Motivate: Aligning Our Purpose, Belonging, and Values for Success

Emily Esfahani Smith, MA, Psychotherapist; Doctoral Candidate in Clinical Psychology, [Catholic University](#); International Best-Selling Author; Writer; Popular TED Talk Speaker with over 15 million views; Managing Editor, Hoover Institution; Board Member, Project Wayfinder; Author, *The Power of Meaning: Crafting a Life That Matters* (2017)

Desirably Difficult: The Counterintuitive Science of Learning

Veronica X. Yan, PhD, Assistant Professor of Educational Psychology, [The University of Texas at Austin](#); Fellow, Mind and Society Center, [University of Southern California](#); Recipient of the "Rising Star" Award from the Association for Psychological Science; Co-Author, "Becoming Better Learners, Becoming Better Teachers: Augmenting Learning via Cognitive and Motivational Theories" (2023, *Human Arenas*)

Authenticity and the Experience of Meaning in Life

Joshua A. Hicks, PhD, Professor, Psychological and Brain Sciences, College of Arts and Sciences, [Texas A&M University](#); Fellow, Human Flourishing Lab, Archbridge Institute; Co-Author, "Interpersonal Mattering and the Experience of Meaning in Life" (2025, *Positive Psychology*) and "The Science of Meaning in Life" (2021, *Annual Review of Psychology*)

Direction for Depth: A Framework for a Purposeful Differentiation

Andi McNair, BS, Educational Consultant; Gifted Education Specialist; Digital Innovation Specialist, Education Service Center (ESC) Region 12; Author, *Designing for Depth in the Classroom* (2022), *Genius Hour* (2022, 2nd Edition), and *A Meaningful Mess: A Teacher's Guide to Student-Driven Classrooms, Authentic Learning, Student Empowerment, and Keeping It All Together Without Losing Your Mind* (2019)

Meaningful and Relevant: Engaging Learners With Purposeful, Relevant Instruction

A.J. Juliani, MEd, Founder, Adaptable Learning; Director, Learning and Innovation; Instructor, Graduate School of Education, [University of Pennsylvania](#); Author, *Meaningful and Relevant: Engaging Learners in an Age of Distraction* (2025), *Adaptable* (2021), *The PBL Playbook* (2018), *Intentional Innovation* (2017), and *Learning by Choice: 10 Ways Choice and Differentiation Create an Engaging Learning Experience for Every Student* (2015); Co-Author, *Empower: What Happens When Students Own Their Learning* (2017) and *LAUNCH* (2016)

Applying Depth of Knowledge and Cognitive Rigor: Five Teacher Moves to Meaningful Learning

Karin J. Hess, EdD, President, Educational Research in Action, LLC; Author, *Rigor by Design, Not Chance: Deeper Thinking Through Actionable Instruction and Assessment* (2023); Co-Author, *Applying Depth of Knowledge and Cognitive Rigor: An Educator's Guide to Supporting Deeper Learning* (2025) and *Deeper Competency-Based Learning: Making Equitable, Student-Centered, Sustainable Shifts* (2020)

PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS (More In-Depth and Hands-on)

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12 8:00 AM – 11:00 AM

(Cost per person: \$169. By advance registration only. Select one of five. Cost is \$199 if not also attending the conference.)

1. Hugging Porcupines: Building Positive Relationships With Kids Who Have Challenging Behaviors

Based on his latest book, *Hugging Porcupines: Month-by-Month Strategies to Support Our Most Challenging Students*, Mike Anderson will offer practical strategies for educators who work with kids who struggle with relationships and regulation in school. You will explore why some students push us away (even though they desperately want connection), resist learning (even though they need academic skills), and break rules (even though it would be easier to just “do what they should”). Discover key strategies that enable educators to be warm and demanding, supportive, and empowering. **Mike Anderson, MS**, Former Elementary School Teacher; Recipient of the National “Milken Educator” Award; Former Program Developer, Northeast Foundation for Children; Author, *Hugging Porcupines: Month-by-Month Strategies to Support Our Most Challenging Students* (2026), *Rekindle Your Professional Fire* (2024), and *Tackling the Motivation Crisis* (2021)

2. Engaging Minds: Building a Culture of Learning With the Science of Engagement

Young people often internalize their performance as a reflection of their identity. Pair that perception with an adolescent’s natural fear of embarrassment, and our students end up hiding their mistakes and refraining from asking for help, leading to poor performance. The Fellowship Using the Science of Engagement at The University of Texas at Austin equips teachers with proven behavioral and cognitive science strategies to disrupt this cycle and improve engagement. Join us to learn more about those techniques and how you can implement them with your students. **Ryan F. Smith, MEd**, Director, The Fellowship Using the Science of Engagement, Texas Behavioral Science and Policy Institute, [The University of Texas at Austin](#); and **Jessica Prado, MEdT**, Alumna and Senior Administrative Program Coordinator and Instructional Designer, The Fellowship Using the Science of Engagement, Texas Behavioral Science and Policy Institute, [The University of Texas at Austin](#)

3. What the Science of Learning Is Not Telling You: How Memory Really Works and How to Leverage It in Your Classroom

Retrieval practice, spaced repetition, and interleaving have earned a prominent place in teacher professional development, and the research supporting them is real. But many popular Science of Learning proponents tell only part of the story. For example, you need to have a memory to retrieve one. So, how are memories made? Retrieval may strengthen a memory, even if inaccurate, and feedback is essential, especially early on. Drawing on a broader view of how memory actually works from formation to reconstruction, you will be invited to think more critically about what the research says, what it doesn’t say, and what that means for your classrooms. **David B. Daniel, PhD**, Conference Chair; Professor Emeritus of Psychology, [James Madison University](#); Co-Author, “Toward an Ecological Science of Teaching” (2021, *Canadian Psychology*); and **John T. Almarode, PhD**, Professor of Education, [James Madison University](#); Co-Author, *How Learning Works* (2021)

4. Meaningful Mess: Utilizing Passion Projects to Make Learning Meaningful

If you’re looking to refresh gifted services, make school a place learners want to be, or find innovative ways to see and support giftedness, Genius Hour is the best place to start. It can transform your teaching and students’ experiences, reignite your passion, and give learners the space to thrive. In this workshop, Andi McNair will show you how her framework—the 6 Ps of Genius Hour—makes passion-based learning both manageable and meaningful. When implemented well, Genius Hour becomes a powerful way to identify and serve gifted learners—letting them lean into strengths, build authentic skills, and make real impact. **Andi McNair, BS**, Educational Consultant; Gifted Education Specialist; Digital Innovation Specialist; Author, *Designing for Depth in the Classroom* (2022), *Genius Hour* (2022, 2nd Edition), and *A Meaningful Mess: A Teacher’s Guide to Student-Driven Classrooms, Authentic Learning, Student Empowerment, and Keeping It All Together Without Losing Your Mind* (2019)

5. Learning by Choice and PBL: Creating More Engaging Learning Environments for Every Student

What if the key to deeper student engagement isn’t greater compliance, but greater agency? In this interactive workshop, you will discover how combining choice-driven learning with Project-Based Learning (PBL) can transform classrooms into dynamic environments where every student finds meaningful entry points into rigorous learning. Explore the research behind autonomy, motivation, and engagement; examine practical frameworks for providing meaningful choice while maintaining high expectations and accountability; and learn how to design PBL experiences that honor students’ diverse interests, strengths, and learning pathways. You will leave with practical, ready-to-use strategies for creating learner-centered classrooms that move beyond one-size-fits-all instruction—environments where students don’t simply participate, but take ownership of their learning. **A.J. Juliani, MEd**, Founder, Adaptable Learning; Director, Learning and Innovation; Instructor, Graduate School of Education, [University of Pennsylvania](#); Author, *Meaningful and Relevant* (2025), *Adaptable* (2021), *The PBL Playbook* (2018), and *Learning by Choice* (2015); Co-Author, *Empower* (2017) and *LAUNCH* (2016)

EVENTS & OPPORTUNITIES

MEETING OF THE MINDS – WINE & CHEESE RECEPTION

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12 from 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM — Free and Open to All Attendees

Enjoy this opportunity to meet other attendees and some of the nation’s brightest minds at this wine and cheese reception.

Advance registration required on the registration form.

PRESENT A POSTER SESSION AT THE NOVEMBER CONFERENCE

Share and present your scientific research, successful programs, or interventions you have implemented in your school or district to improve student motivation and engagement, metacognition, mastery and competency, or effective strategies for learning and teaching. Submit a summary of your poster session for review to info@LearningAndTheBrain.com. **Proposal deadline is October 23, 2026. For more information, visit LearningAndTheBrain.com, or call 857-444-1500 x1.**

NOVEMBER CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM

Five ways to register: **Phone:** 857-444-1500 x1
Fax: 857-357-7011
Web: LearningAndTheBrain.com

Email: registration@LearningAndTheBrain.com
Postal mail: ERI • 78 Brooks Road,
New Canaan, CT 06840-6250

PLEASE PHOTOCOPY THIS FORM FOR EACH APPLICANT.

Name		Position
Organization		
Address		
City		State/Province
ZIP/Postal Code	Country	Phone
Email		

DEMAND IS HIGH AND SPACE IS LIMITED. PLEASE REGISTER EARLY.

Register Me for the Conference: \$ _____

Early Registration (THROUGH SEP. 25, 2026)	\$679 per person (\$579 per person for groups of 5+)
General Registration (THROUGH NOV. 6, 2026)	\$749 per person (\$649 per person for groups of 5+)
Late Registration (AFTER NOV. 6, 2026)	\$779 per person (\$679 per person for groups of 5+)

Register Me for a Thursday, November 12 Pre-Conference Workshop Add \$30 if not attending the Nov. conference \$ _____

Please check one of five:

☐ Hugging Porcupines	8:00 am – 11:00 am	\$169 per person
☐ Engaging Minds	8:00 am – 11:00 am	\$169 per person
☐ What the Science of Learning Is Not Telling You	8:00 am – 11:00 am	\$169 per person
☐ Meaningful Mess	8:00 am – 11:00 am	\$169 per person
☐ Learning by Choice and PBL	8:00 am – 11:00 am	\$169 per person

Sign Me Up for Professional Development Credit (FREE)

☐ Please send via email

Sign Me Up for Attending Live or Virtually

☐ I plan to attend in Austin ☐ I plan to attend virtually

Register Me for the Reception (FREE)

☐ Register me for the November 12 *Meeting of the Minds* Reception.

Register Me for the “Evidence-Based” PD Courses Website \$ _____

☐ Register me for the \$149 Annual Subscription (Save \$50 when registering for conference).

Sign Me Up for Emails (FREE)

☐ Email me the monthly L&B Newsletter ☐ Email me information about upcoming L&B events

All prices are in U.S. dollars. GRAND TOTAL: \$ _____

☐ Please check here if you have any special ADA requirements, and call 857-444-1500 x1.
The Hilton Austin is ADA compliant.

PAYMENT METHOD ☐ Check enclosed ☐ Purchase Order enclosed ☐ Credit Card (VISA, MC, or AMEX)

Credit Card Number: _____ Exp: _____ CVV: _____

Cardholder Name: _____

Cardholder Billing Address: _____ ZIP: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Make check or purchase order payable to **Educator Resources, Inc. (ERI)**, and mail it along with your registration form to:
ERI, 78 Brooks Road, New Canaan, CT 06840-6250.

P.O.s will be invoiced if sent without a check prior to conference. **Registrations without payment or purchase order will not be confirmed.**

REGISTRATION POLICIES Registrations are taken and confirmed on a first-come, first-served basis according to receipt of full payment or purchase order. Unpaid registrations without a purchase order will be canceled after 30 days. If you do not receive a confirmation within three weeks after sending full payment or purchase order, call 857-444-1500 x1. Early conference registration is \$679 (\$579 per person for groups of 5 or more) through September 25, 2026. General conference registration is \$749 per person (\$649 per person for groups of 5 or more when registering together) through November 6, 2026. After November 6, 2026, late registration is \$779 per person (\$679 per person for groups of 5 or more when registering together).

SUBSTITUTIONS AND CANCELLATIONS Substitutions are permissible up to seven days before the conference, but you must notify ERI in writing by fax or mail. Cancellations must be requested no later than November 6, 2026. No cancellations can be accepted after November 6, 2026. Because cancellations incur substantial administrative costs, we regret that it is necessary to charge a cancellation fee of \$75 per person if you cancel by September 25, 2026, or \$150 per person if you cancel after September 25, 2026, but by November 6, 2026.

CONFERENCE PROGRAM CHANGES Educator Resources, Inc. (ERI) reserves the right, without having to refund any monies to participants, to make changes in the conference, its program, schedule, workshops, sessions, events, location, and/or faculty should ERI, in its sole discretion, deem any such changes necessary or advisable. Similarly, ERI further reserves the right to cancel any workshops, sessions, events, credit courses, or the conference entirely, in which case ERI's liability to participants shall be strictly limited to a refund of those fees. ERI, the Cooperating Organizations, and Sponsors are not responsible for (nor do they necessarily endorse) the efficacy, accuracy, or content of any recommendations, statements, research, or other information provided at the conference.