

TASA 2009 Syfr
Tomorrow's Education in Today's Classrooms
Part I: A Whole New Brain
July 19 - 22, 2009 • Hyatt Lost Pines • Lost Pines, Texas

AGENDA

SUNDAY, July 19

6:00 - 6:30 **Welcome Reception**

6:30 - 7:30 **Dinner**

7:30 - 8:30 **Syfr - What's In a Name?**

Richard Erdmann, Founder and CEO of Syfr

Syfr (Syfr is based on the Arabic word for zero - *sifr*) has an interesting history as a concept and provides an excellent metaphor for our work. This quick introduction to the retreat will use the story of zero to introduce our topic of **A Whole New Brain**, and the complexities of bringing about change.

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MONDAY, July 20

7:30 - 8:30 **Breakfast Buffet Available**

8:30 - 9:00 **Focusing the Brain**

Christine Drew, President and COO, Syfr

What do we know about neuroscience, its evolution as a science, the research results and their application to teaching and learning? This session is designed to focus our brains on our topic by looking at what we already think we know . . .

Paradoxes of Neuroscience in Three Parts

Sharon Begley, Author, Train Your Mind Change Your Brain

The brain is full of paradoxes. As we become more of an expert, we are liable to become more closed-minded at the same time. The same brain function that creates one creates the other. If we provide a reward, students will learn quicker, but too much of a good thing has its disadvantages. The list could continue. This discussion looks at the research in neuroscience, the seeming paradoxes, the challenges that these pose for teaching and learning, and ways around the paradoxes to productive classroom practice.

9:00 - 10:00 **Paradoxes of Neuroscience - Part I**
The Science of Neuroscience *Sharon Begley*

10:00 - 10:15 **Break**

10:15 - 10:45 **Paradoxes of Neuroscience - Part II**
Use Your Brain *Dick Erdmann, Christine Drew*

10:45 - Noon **Paradoxes of Neuroscience - Part III**
The Research into Practice *Sharon Begley*

Noon - 12:45 **Lunch**

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MONDAY, July 20 (cont'd.)

Diagnosis and Treatment: The Brain or the Skill? in Three Parts

Annette Goodman, The Arrowsmith School

Multiple parts of the brain are always engaged in learning and assessment. When a question is missed, is it a lack of content knowledge, skill or is one of the parts of the brain simply not making its contribution? This session looks at brain diagnosis as practiced in the Arrowsmith Program and how the learning activity changes when it is a part of the brain that is not contributing.

12:45 - 2:00 **Diagnosis and Treatment: The Brain or the Skill? - Part I**
The Neuroscience and Education Connection *Annette Goodman*

2:00 - 2:15 **Break**

2:15 - 3:30 **Diagnosis and Treatment: The Brain or the Skill? - Part II**
Understanding Auditory Processing *Annette Goodman*

3:30 - 6:30 **Time for Team Discussion and Personal Time**

6:30 - 9:30 **Reception, Dinner and Cultural Inquiry:**
Helen Sung, Jazz Musician

Music is perhaps the most obviously creative and collaborative endeavor. Helen Sung will describe jazz in those terms, provide some examples, perform this evening and make a collaborative activity available to students from all the participating school districts through the web.

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TUESDAY, July 21

7:30 - 8:30 **Breakfast Buffet Available**

8:30 - 9:00 **Engaging the Brain**

Christine Drew, President and COO, Syfr

What have we learned about neuroscience, its evolution as a science, the research results and their application to teaching and learning? This session is designed for emotional engagement and some quick repetition on our topics as a model for application of neuroscience in teaching.

9:00 - 10:30 **Diagnosis and Treatment: The Brain or the Skill? - Part III**
Understanding Dyscalculia: A Cognitive Approach

Annette Goodman

10:30 - 10:45 **Break**

10:45 - 11:45 **Hard Wired: The Role of Culture and Aging**

Bruce Wexler, Author, Brain and Culture

Richard Erdmann, Founder and CEO, Syfr

In a sense this topic has three themes: Culture is a very important influence on the brain and how it develops. As we age our mental flexibility diminishes, making our cultural orientation somewhat fixed; and cultural diversity will almost always include conflict as a result. This premise influences everything from teaching to organizational change to global conflict, and this discussion will take the 5-mile high view right into the classroom.

11:45 - 12:30 **Lunch**

12:30 - 1:30 **Hard Wired: Culture and Aging - continued**

1:30 - 1:45 **Break**

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TUESDAY, July 21 (cont'd.)

1:45 - 2:45

Film: Iron Jawed Angels

Christine Drew, President and COO, Syfr

This film is about suffrage, and we will use it to explore cultural wiring and how it affects gender and generational conflict. It will give us the opportunity to think about the importance of the visual representation of historical content and their impact on all learners. We will explore the film both in terms of content and message as well as an art form.

2:45 - 6:30

Time for Team Discussion and Personal Time

6:30 - 9:30

Reception and Dinner with an Art Walk

Location: Chief's Pavilion

Syfr's collection of Impressionist art reproductions, used to illustrate the process and elements of change, will be set up in the Chief's Pavilion. Richard Erdmann will explain how the art is used to explain one element of the process and then you can tour the paintings with your guidebook.

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WEDNESDAY, JULY 22

7:30 - 8:30 Breakfast Buffet Available

8:30 - 10:00 Using Classroom Research with Accountability to Transform Organizations

Christine Drew, President and COO, Syfr

Richard Erdmann, Founder and CEO, Syfr

By now you will have been exposed to a variety of ideas about the brain, teaching and learning. Through the Syfr's social network, we can be working with districts in a variety of research projects that involve action research. Action research is designed for schools to conduct their own research. Syfr will suggest some projects to be taken back to the school districts, and ways that the research can be used to change the schools.

10:00 - 10:15 Break

10:15- 11:30 Research into Practice continued and Closing