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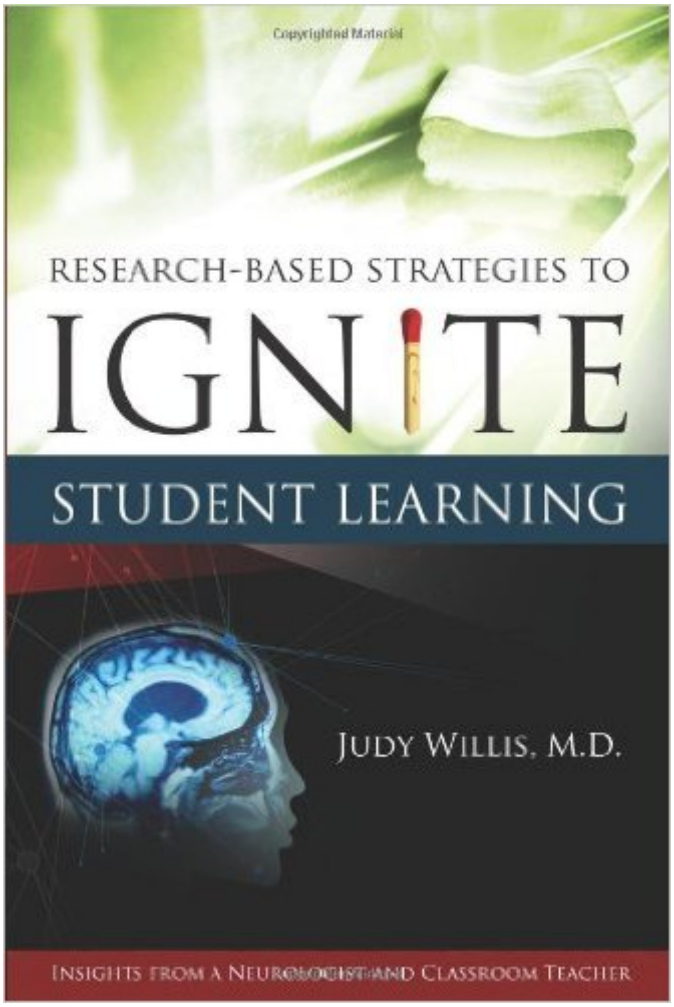
Research-Based Strategies To Ignite Student Learning: Insights From A Neurologist And Classroom Teacher



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Synopsis

In this book, written by an author who is both a neurologist and a classroom teacher, Judy Willis combs through brain research and pulls out the information that is most valid and relevant to classroom teaching. Find out how to enhance your students' memory and test-taking abilities. And discover ways to captivate and hold students' attention and encourage their participation and progress.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Reading a book on pedagogy written by a neurologist sounds like as much fun as reading a standardized test manual, but Dr Judy Willis's Research-Based Strategies to Ignite Student Learning truly surprised me. Willis has written an excellent book for helping teachers understand how to teach in ways that engage students' brains and lead to deeper learning. The short text is easy to understand, yet filled with valuable information for teachers. Teachers must constantly make decisions about which teaching method to use at any given point. Complicating the decision-making, however, is the plethora of methods from which teachers may choose, and the fact that proponents of so many different methods claim to have scientific research to support their ideas. Nevertheless, the task of choosing might be a little easier after reading Willis's book. While many texts focus on advising teachers how to implement a specific teaching strategy, Willis focuses on helping teachers understand how the human brain works and how teachers can use that knowledge to choose strategies that tap into the brain's normal processes. In just over 100 pages,

Willis deals with a wide range of educational issues. For example, she describes how the brain stores information and develops networking connections between related data. This, she writes, can help teachers understand why students sometimes have difficulty learning vocabulary. Unless a student is shown the relationships between existing knowledge and the new vocabulary, the student's brain stores the new information in isolation. Storing information in isolation then makes it more difficult for the brain to retrieve the information later. Conversely, if the student understands the connections between previous knowledge and new knowledge, the brain literally networks the information, which makes it easier for the brain to retrieve the information in the future. Willis describes how teachers can use graphic organizers, visualization, and role-play to help students make those cognitive connections. An entire chapter is dedicated to understand how stress affects the brain and how schools and families can work together to reduce stress on students and help students handle the stress they do feel. Another chapter is dedicated to discussing many good assessment techniques. In this context, rather than merely describing how to write rubrics, Willis describes how rubrics help students' brains develop. Of course, in describing so many neurological functions, it is necessary for Willis to use intimidating terms, such as dendrites, occipital lobes, and prefrontal cortex. Willis does a remarkable job, however, explaining such terms. And in case the reader forgets what a term means mid-book, the book includes a handy glossary. I found Research-Based Strategies to Ignite Student Learning to be a surprisingly understandable, yet treasure-packed resource. And its readability and short length mean one can easily read it over a weekend. Best of all, the book could meet the needs of a wide audience. Willis has explained her ideas well enough that preservice teachers could easily understand the material; in fact, I can see this book becoming popular in teacher education programs. At the same time, the book offers such a unique perspective and valuable information that even veteran teachers are likely to benefit from investing their time in reading it.Lovestoteach

Dr. Willis is a unique blend of common sense, humor and brains. Judy is a rarity being both a "brain" doctor, and a classroom teacher. She cares about her students, and works tirelessly with her students and on-going research. This book gives you interesting medical facts, then applies it directly to classroom strategies.I've always taught using a multi-sensory approach, but now I know why I do it! This book will back up what you know--and what you do in the classroom. I've had a lot of fun "surprising" the brains of my students using Judy's ideas. Now I have this book, my own neurologist/teacher in my backpack of tricks.PS I love the glossary!Joan P. Brown

I am so excited to finally be able to see what is going on inside my teenage student’s brains.As teachers, we are aware that presentation is a key element of what we do to engage our students. How did we get that usually reluctant student to answer a question; what made the class get so excited about our lesson today. Dr. Willis presents some very practical yet eye-opening details on how to engage students before you have even begun your lesson.As often as I am reminded of how short the typical adolescent attention span is, Dr. Willis offers us a scientific explanation for why it is true. I find myself excited at the prospect that I can hack (a la computer hacking) my classroom presentation to achieve success in the classroom in a more consistent way.Judy has changed my teaching forever. Thanks Judy!

Board-certified neurologist and middle school teacher Judy Willis, M.D. presents Research-Based Strategies to Ignite Student Learning, a guide for K-12 educators that combines the latest findings of learning-centered brain research with practical experience in the classroom. The result is a resource for helping students achieve their full academic potential that covers memory, learning, and test-taking success; strategies to corner student attention; how to mitigate the negative effects and draw benefits from the positive effects of stress and emotion in learning; and much more. A glossary, bibliography for further reading, and index round out this invaluable supplement to enhancing one’s grade school curriculum for maximum effectiveness.

Very readable and useful little book by a classroom teacher who has also had a career in neurology.Cognitive Science is a particular interest of mine. I am always interested in brain-based theories of how to engage students in the classroom learning experience. Perhaps because this volume is already six years old, I didn’t find any information that was new to me, but I enjoyed reviewing the concepts put forth here.This is a good introductory book. It is practical, straight-forward and easy to understand.Kim BurdickStanton, DE

This book also helped me find the missing pieces of the puzzle. I don’t usually read my mom’s books but I read this one. It is interesting and fun to read.

The information here is invaluable. Dr. Willis shares deep insight, understanding, and information. If you only read one educational book this year, make it this one! The "gray matter" sections give background info on brain mechanics. Very helpful. However, I found it useful to go back after the first reading, and read the book again without the gray matter sections. This gives the teacher

explicit tips on how to get newly learned information into students' long term memory. What could be better? This book is a real gem.

I bought this book as part of a class. There is a lot of great information available in this book about about how the brain works when learning new concepts. It talks a lot about long term memory and how to learn using that memory. Great book. I ended up quoting parts of this book during when I was defending my thesis project. This book is interesting and surprisingly easy to read.

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