

## **Brain-Targeted Teaching Model: Teachers' Lens**

Entering the halls of Roland Park Elementary/Middle School, one would surely notice the brightly colored murals that grace the walls, the scent of peppermint coming from a kindergarten classroom, or the classical music drifting from a third-grade room. Around the corner, one might see first graders gleefully conducting surveys as they become "data detectives" and fifth graders combining yoga with the study of poetry and art. Sixth graders might be wearing costumes of Roman gods and goddesses as they describe ancient religious rituals and eighth graders determining the probability of getting out of school early based on yearly weather statistics.

Such innovative instruction is evidence that the teachers at Roland Park Elementary/Middle School have embraced the Brain-Targeted Teaching Model developed by their principal from 1993 through 2006, Dr. Mariale Hardiman, currently the Assistant Dean for Urban School Partnerships at Johns Hopkins University. The model, which combines research in the fields of neurosciences and education, is featured in her book *Connecting Brain Research with Effective Teaching: The Brain-Targeted Teaching Model*. In addition to implementing the model's components in their classrooms, more than 30 teachers at the school are writing learning units to be shared with other educators. Teachers view the model as a powerful, highly relevant approach to improving student achievement. According to fifth grade teacher Linda Bluth, "The application of brain research to teaching will help educators not only to meet the demands of No Child Left Behind but will also help them expand instruction beyond standardized test taking. The Brain-Targeted Teaching Model is an antidote to this limited view of education."

With its comprehensive approach to education, the Brain-Targeted Teaching Model is receiving national recognition. Dr. Hardiman has presented her model at national conferences such as Harvard's *Learning and the Brain Conference*, Yale's 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Symposium of the Comer School Development Program, and the University of Connecticut's *Symposium for Success*. She has also presented at numerous schools and school districts in Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Illinois and New York. Teachers from Roland Park enjoy participating with Dr. Hardiman in many of these presentations.

Recently, Roland Park teachers conducted their own professional development, sharing lessons and units based on Dr. Hardiman's work connecting brain-targeted teaching to arts integration. "Brain targeted teaching," states art teacher Clare Grizzard, "promotes collaboration among teachers, supports arts integration in all content areas, and allows for deeper learning through hands-on experiential encounters with concepts."

English teacher Sidney Saunders maintains that the Brain-Targeted Teaching Model has helped her to see the big picture in terms of planning and implementing her curriculum. "I wish I had learned the model as part of my under-graduate education program; applying it will make me a more effective teacher and my students more efficient learners."

Roland Park teachers plan to continue to share their work with other teachers through publication of their learning units on their website [www.braintargetedteaching.org](http://www.braintargetedteaching.org). For more information, contact Dr. Hardiman at [mmhardiman@jhu.edu](mailto:mmhardiman@jhu.edu) or Clare Grizzard at [claregrizzard@earthlink.net](mailto:claregrizzard@earthlink.net).