

# With Inspiration® and teamwork, Florida students pass the test

## Diagramming test material proves to be better method of helping students memorize and recall information

Students at Pope John Paul II, a preschool through eighth grade school in Citrus County, Florida, are clamoring to use Inspiration to help them study for tests. The results of a recent social studies test proved that visual learning techniques helped the students remember information better than just reading the chapter. Plus, they had a great time working as a team to learn new information.

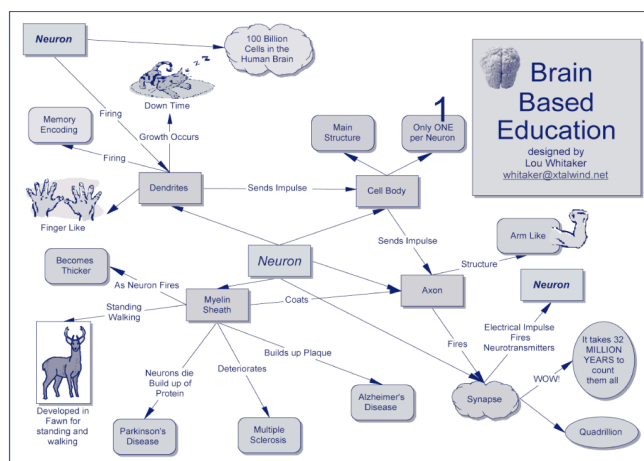
In October 2002, students in eighth grade social studies were having trouble concentrating on their work. The students' lack of motivation prompted their teacher to assign them an entire chapter to read and study; a test over the material would follow the next day. School principal Lou Whitaker heard about the students' assignment and decided it would be a great opportunity to help them use Inspiration to study for their test. She asked the eighth graders to read the social studies chapter and then bring their textbooks to the computer lab the following day.

### Inspiration in a one-computer classroom

Using a computer connected to a television screen, Whitaker led the students in a discussion of their social studies chapter. Together, they worked in Inspiration to determine the main idea and then place subtopics and supporting details into their diagram. "They were very engaged," recalls Whitaker. "The students were able to teach other students and help each other learn. They really enjoyed working with Inspiration."

The students ran out of time with only half of the chapter mapped out, so they did a quick review of the Inspiration diagram they had created and left to take the test. The next day, Whitaker asked the students how they had done on the test. "Oh, Mrs. Whitaker, we all got C's!" said the students.

Surprised by the average scores, Whitaker investigated further and found that the students had earned A's on the first half of the test and F's on the second half. They knew all the answers from the part of the chapter that was diagrammed in Inspiration. "They could see the diagram in their minds and remember the connections between the information," says Whitaker. "But when they came to questions from the last half of the chapter, they couldn't recall what they had read."



*In less than two hours, Lou Whitaker learned how to use Inspiration and built this diagram on neurons for a presentation.*

Whitaker wanted to find out how the eighth graders felt about the study method, so she gave them a survey asking questions about Inspiration. The results showed that 73 percent of the students said that using Inspiration to review chapter material helped them a great deal, and 86 percent felt they would have done better on the test if they had used Inspiration to review the entire chapter.

### Search for brain-based technology tools leads to Inspiration

The dramatic results from the students' test didn't really surprise Whitaker. She's been recommending Inspiration in presentations and workshops since 1999, after discovering it while doing research for a presentation on brain-based education. In less than two hours she had explored the program and built a diagram to demonstrate a part of the brain. Whitaker was

impressed with Inspiration—not only how appropriate it was for brain-based education, but also how easy it was to learn and use. In fact, she decided to include Inspiration in her presentation, demonstrating how to use the software as a tool to enhance learning.

"I'm sure the reason I received such great evaluations was because of Inspiration," laughs Whitaker.

In her Kidspiration and Inspiration presentations, Whitaker often asks for a show of hands to find out who is currently using the software. As hands go up, she asks for feedback on the programs. "I've never heard a negative comment," says Whitaker. "Educators say that once their teachers get comfortable with it, the students love it, and the key is just practice."

**"They could see the diagram in their minds and remember the connections between the information."**  
— Lou Whitaker

Whitaker hopes to get her sixth through eighth grade teachers up and running with Inspiration during the remainder of the 2003 school year. Thanks to the spontaneous "action research" performed earlier in the year, she has confidence in the benefits of using Inspiration to help students learn to study and take notes.

Whitaker relates, "What's great about Inspiration is that it can be used as a teaching tool no matter what subject area you teach—science, social studies, math—it hits them all. If teachers have sequential thinkers in their classroom, they can give them an outline. For the visual thinkers, they can give them a diagram. The program meets everyone's needs."



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