

## Lilly Conference

### Presentation By:

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### Whole Brain Teaching Definitions

(Chris Biffle. 2012. [www.wholebrainteaching.com](http://www.wholebrainteaching.com))  
with added commentary by the presenters.

**First Steps:** All of Whole Brain Teaching's instructional techniques are validated by contemporary brain research.

### The "Whole Brain Teaching KEY "

#### CORE FOUR

1. **Class – Yes**
2. **Scoreboard**
3. **Teach – Okay**
4. **Mirror**

#### Critical Thinking

5. **Because clapper**
6. **Problem Solver**

#### Useful tools

1. **Switch**
2. **Hands and Eyes**
3. **It's cool...**
4. **Woods**
5. **Volume O Meter**

#### Website:

[www.wholebrainteaching.com](http://www.wholebrainteaching.com)

**Core4 Class-Yes:** Our primary attention-getter activates the prefrontal cortex, often called the CEO of the brain. The prefrontal cortex controls, among other functions, decision-making, planning and focus of attention. Little if any learning can take place if the prefrontal cortex is not engaged. We think of the Class-Yes as a brain switch that readies students for instruction. The instructor says :”Class,” and the students respond in the same tone of voice with the word

“Yes.” It is important to change the tone and/or duration of the word to keep students engaged. Additionally, a teacher may use other word combinations for variety, such as the school name with the students responding with the mascot.

**Core4 The Scoreboard:** The limbic system, deep inside the brain, is the source of our emotions. When an instructor marks a Smiley or a Frowny on the Scoreboard, students feel a small, positive or negative, emotional jolt. By enlivening the marking routine with a “mighty oh yeah” or a “mighty groan” the reward circuitry in the limbic system is activated.

Mighty “Oh Yeah.” And “Mighty Groan.”

**Core4 Teach-Okay:** Brain and learning research indicates that students learn the most when they are engaged in teaching each other. By emphasizing energetic, instructional gesturing, we engage, during teach-okay sessions, five of students' most powerful brain areas: visual cortex (seeing gestures), motor cortex (making gestures), Broca's area (verbalizing a lesson), Wernicke's area (hearing a lesson), and the limbic system, (giving emotional content to a lesson.) The teacher gives a short instruction of what is to be done and then does some gestures and says “Teach.” The students mimic the gesture and say “OK.” The students then engage in the task presented in the instructions before the “Teach.” For instance, the teacher might clap his or her hands twice and say “Teach.” The students would clap their hands twice and say “OK.” The students should use the same voice the teacher used for the “OK.” This also introduces variety in the process.

**Core4 Mirror:** Many brain scientists believe that we learn by mirroring the gestures and activities of others. They have identified mirror neurons scattered throughout the brain that are activated by mimicking the behavior we observe. Our own experience in WBT classroom indicates that when a class mirrors our gestures and, when appropriate, repeats our words, a powerful learning bond is created between students and teachers.

**Critical Thinking** The Whole Brain Teaching definition of critical thinking states to students: “Critical thinking is supporting your opinion with lots of strong evidence.” To think critically, students need three components: an opinion, strong evidence, and more strong evidence (one point is not enough).

**Critical Thinking – Because Clapper** When students are giving an answer, they restate the problem then say “because” as they clap their hands once, then give the strong response. If the answer is trite, this is class “because pitter patter.”

**Critical Thinking - Problem Solver** Students are asked a question. The teacher says “problem solver.” The student repeat “problem solver” with the turn-the-key gesture, then turn to each other and brainstorm solutions

**Ah Switch:** Some students talk easily, often too easily! Other students fall into the role of passive listeners. In terms of brain structure, classes are often divided between those who are speakers and listeners. By using Switch, an instructor can easily teach listening skills to the speakers and speaking skills to the listeners. SWITCH is very effective with older students who

are talkative and students of any age who want to finish “their” story. “Switch” stops the story and gives the other speaker an equal share of speaking time. A teacher can assign a simple task, such as, “What did you find most interesting in the article you read for class?” The first student starts talking until the teacher says “Switch.” The students do the Ah Switch gesture, and the second student begins to talk. Even if in mid-sentence, the first student stops talking when the Switch is said.

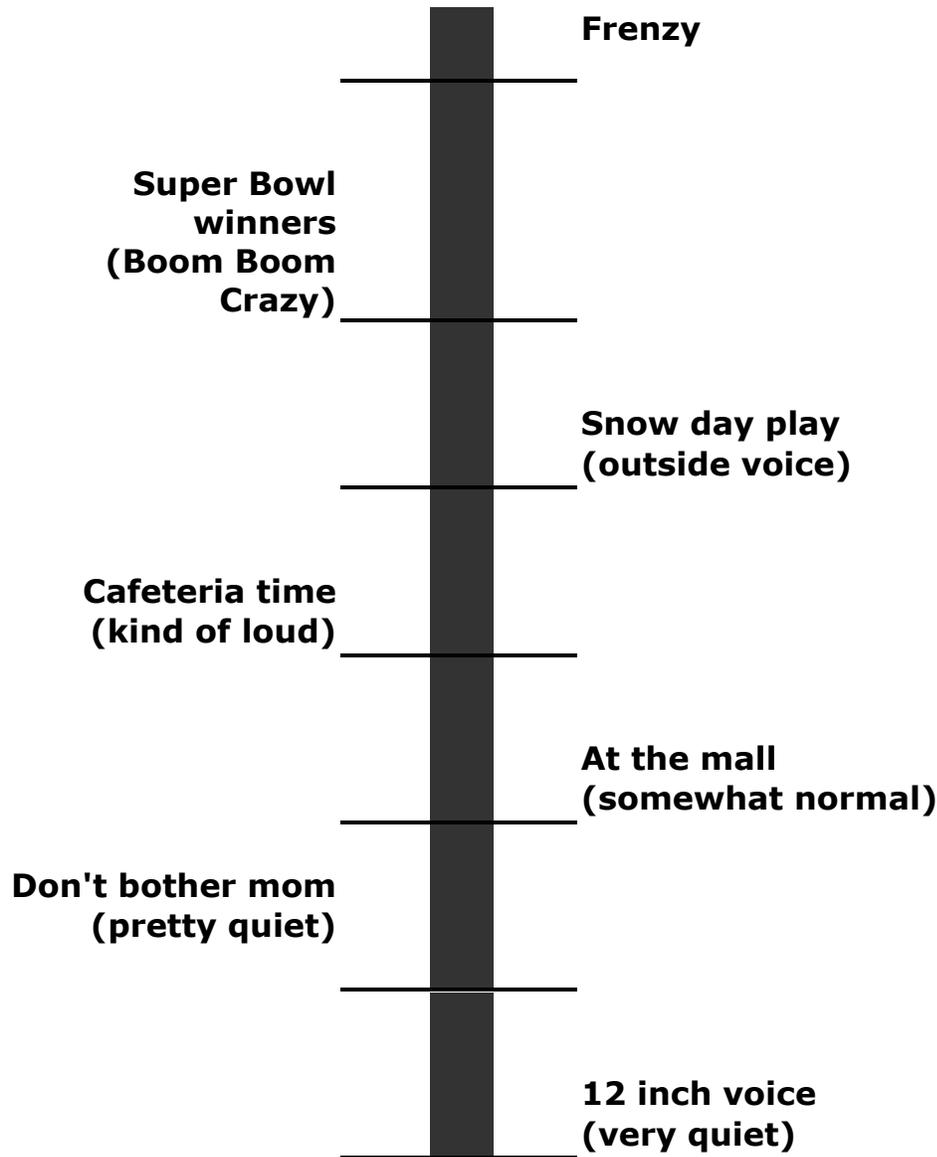
### **High 5 Switch.**

**Hands and Eyes:** When we are making an important point, we want students to focus intensely on what we are saying. In the hands of a practiced WBT instructor, Hands and Eyes creates instant silence, eliminating all learning distractions; the prefrontal cortex takes control of brain activity focusing the visual cortex and the auditory cortex on the lesson at hand.

**It’s Cool** As student steps up to the challenge and offers an answer. The answer is incorrect. Or a student is called on and is totally stuck. It is time for “It’s cool.” The teacher says to the class, “Let’s tell Randy ‘It’s cool.’” The students in unison say “It’s cool.” The message being conveyed is that being incorrect is of no consequence.

**Ten Finger Woo (and other woo’s)** There are many “woo’s” including the *ten finger woo*, the *rolling ten finger woo*, the *pinky woo* etc. A student does something well, makes a good attempt, or is caught being helpful. The teacher says, “Let’s give Randy a Ten Finger Woo.” Everyone turns towards Randy, points both hands at him, wiggles their fingers, and says, “woo.”

# Volume-O-Meter



**"Yada, yada, yada" to practice the voice-o-meter.**

**Create your own words... better yet, have your students create the level names.**