

**Recommended Reading:**  
***Why Don't Students Like School***

Reviewed by Linda Farrell, Tina Osenga, and Michael Hunter

**Why Don't Students Like School: A Cognitive Scientist Answers Questions about How the Mind Works and What it Means for the Classroom**

Daniel T. Willingham

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\$11.84 on Amazon.com (\$10.42 for Kindle Edition); \$24.95 list price

Daniel Willingham is a cognitive psychologist and Professor of Psychology at the University of Virginia. He studies how people think, perceive, learn, and remember. In this engaging book, Willingham applies findings from cognitive psychology to education. Reading Willingham's approachable writing is like having a long conversation about the best practices for teaching with a brilliant friend.

The book concisely describes how mind and memory work, the nature of intelligence, and the differences between the learning and thinking of novices and experts. Each chapter is organized around an essential question, such as "Why Is It So Hard for Students to Understand Abstract Ideas?" and "How Can I Help Slow Learners?" The answers are easy to read and understand. Most importantly, teachers can easily implement Willingham's concrete suggestions to improve student learning.

Willingham presents reasoned and scientifically informed information that disproves several popular ideas about teaching. He explains how critical thinking skills such as reasoning and problem solving require easy access to facts stored in long-term memory. He further explains how focusing primarily on reading strategies instead of content will leave many students without the background knowledge they need to think critically. He shows why discovery learning is a risky choice for many students. By explaining that we learn what we think about, regardless of our talents, he dispels the usefulness of teaching to the strongest of a student's multiple intelligences or specifically to a student's strength with auditory, visual, or kinesthetic learning styles.

This is one of the single best books on education and teaching that we have read. We highly recommend it.

*The authors are founding partners at Readsters, an Alexandria, VA-based firm that helps schools implement research-based reading instruction. They can be reached at [info@Readsters.com](mailto:info@Readsters.com).*