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**Wilson and Conyers Present on the Effectiveness
of Graduate Degree Programs in Brain-Based Teaching**

AUG. 27, 2014—Donna Wilson and Marcus Conyers, codevelopers of a graduate degree program that focuses on brain-based teaching, recently traveled to Cambridge, England, to present a paper on the practical implementation of their program and how it supports the emerging science of learning.

Wilson and Conyers made their presentation at the 2014 Conference on Implementation Science, which took place July 28 at the University of Cambridge. Their graduate program, offered through Southeastern University's Abraham S. Fischler School of Education in Florida, was designed with real-world implementation in mind. As such, discussion of the program fit in well with the theme of the Cambridge conference: "Implementing Implementation Science: The Science of Making Interventions Effective in Real-World Contexts."

Implementation science is a new area of scientific, academic, and practitioner interest that focuses on exploring and explaining what makes interventions effective in

real-world contexts. The purpose of the Cambridge conference was to give psychology and education practitioners, academic leaders, policy-makers and stakeholders the opportunity to explore how to implement interventions effectively in education, psychology, and social care contexts.

Wilson and Conyers' paper was entitled: *Program Designed With Implementation in Mind: Investigating the Impact of Graduate Studies Focused on Applications of the Emerging Science of Learning*. In their presentation, the authors described how their graduate degree program for teachers translates implications from mind, brain, and education research and theories into practical frameworks and strategies so that teachers may better align instruction with research on how students learn.

“We shared data suggesting that graduates of the programs were applying strategies to increase student’s metacognitive and cognitive skills and learning achievement,” Wilson explained. “At the same time, new understandings about neuroplasticity have had a positive impact on expectations of students potential to learn.”

The graduate program developed by Wilson and Conyers has been shown to positively affect the attitudes, beliefs, and practices of teachers in the classroom. Teachers who have completed their brain-based teaching degrees credit the program with helping them to increase student engagement and achievement.

“The analysis of results led us to better understand how some essential ‘big ideas’ can be used as a coherent psychological foundation in teacher education,” Conyers and Wilson reported. Their paper focused on four such ideas: understanding that the structure and function of the brain change in response to learning (known as experience-dependent synaptogenesis), increasing expectations for student learning potential grounded in brain

plasticity, dynamic conceptions of intelligence, and the advantages of explicitly teaching metacognition and cognitive strategies.

In addition to developing their groundbreaking degree programs in brain-based teaching, Wilson and Conyers are authors of several books, including *Five Big Ideas for Effective Teaching: Connecting Mind, Brain, and Education Research to Classroom Practice*. They also are co-founders of the Center for Innovative Education and Prevention, an organization created to empower communities and schools with research-based resources for helping learners to fulfill their unique potential.

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