The title of her bestseller, "Making Connections: Teaching and the Human Brain," may sound simple, but the work of Dr. Renate Caine (Education)—to change teachers' teaching and to improve students' learning—over the past several years has been anything but easy.

Although the book she wrote with her husband Geoffrey Caine is catching on like wildfire across the nation, it has been challenging for the Caines to persuade teachers and administrators that new research on the human brain must bring change in educational services.

Within the last year, however, Renate Caine has found fulfillment helping teachers overcome their fears of breaking with traditional classroom methods and assisting them in building a sense of community among one another, so that they work cooperatively on lesson plans at Park View Middle School in Yucaipa. Aided by a grant from the school district, she serves as a coach for 17 teachers there.

She encourages the teachers to draw on one another's experiences and knowledge, urging them to "get out of the delivery model, in which teachers have the knowledge and pass it on to students in traditional exercises that demand memorization. Instead, Caine expects teachers to act as a team that creates thematic lessons, guides students through experiential situations and draws on expertise from those in their community.

If the topic is the Middle Ages, for example, Caine says it should be "recreated in some meaningful form," so that students learn about a wide range of issues, including health care, wars and cultural events pertinent to that period. Experiential learning is emphasized greatly.

Under the brain-based system of learning, instructors in science and literature might combine a lesson plan and solicitation of advice from a community board member with expertise in art to round out a presentation.

They would use their organizational skills to create an authentic experience for the students where their embedded abilities would emerge," she says. An artistic child in the classroom might draw the clothing of the era while other students focused on different tasks.

Such an undertaking would require the teachers to negotiate with one another about where the story goes," she notes, and then permit the children in discover lessons for themselves.

This is the most difficult transition for teachers to make, says Caine, because "they don't know how to step back and allow children to learn." One of her colleagues in the university's Center for Research in Integrative Learning and Teaching, Dr. Sam Crowell (Education), did just that in a Sacramento-area school he is consulting.

Re-enacting the Donner Party's travels during the pioneer days, the Dry Creek Elementary School third- and fourth-grade class recreated a western scene with costumes and artifacts gathered by the school and the community.

"They solved problems, asked questions, found new ways of doing things that made them reflect upon and understand the challenges of the people of the Old West," Caine says. "This is the kind of learning we advocate. It makes it real for the children."

The brain-based learning method also has enhanced the nurturing environment of the school, she says. "We're seeing a bonding with the students—a lovingness and caring for each other that is quite remarkable," she says, noting that the particular Sacramento elementary school has a large population of children from families with lower socio-economic backgrounds as well as learning disabled students. "We're seeing a real shift with the teachers, too. They love being there."
The key concept to remember in riding the world of ants is that the experience should bring deep and indescribable pleasure, a lot like the pleasure derived from putting your in-laws on a plane to Antarctica following a “little” 37 week visit.

Now, I don’t want you to take this personally, I told my colony of ants on the day they devoured my pizza, “but I’m going to kill you, okay?"

Ants live in a soundless world. They communicate by tapping each other’s antennae or emitting one of 10 or 20 chemical odors that tell them what’s happening. Consequently, they ignored me. Of course, and kept on marching up and down the edge of my filing cabinet carrying pieces of pizza as if my own mother had told them, “Eat! Eat! You’re skinny as toothpicks!”

Maybe the most sociably acceptable means of exterminating ants, I suppose, are those taught by our own Dr. David Polcyn (Biology), who knows how to exterminate without using chemicals hostile to the environment.

However, I’ve never talked with Dr. Polcyn. So over the years I’ve developed my own environmentally friendly methods (which, incidentally, seem much more pleasurable than any ideas a science professor could dream up).

Drinking water may not be so good for humans, for example, but—ecologically speaking—it is perfect for attempting to drown ants. I say “attempting” because ants have been known to survive in water for as long as two weeks.

Freezing ants to death was a method I developed as a boy, although I confess now that any deaths resulting from this technique were really just scientific experiments gone bad. My true goal in freezing ants was to follow a certain recipe: Take one ant. Lure carefully into lid of ungreased JIF Peanut Butter jar. Place containers in freezer for 30 to 60 seconds. Freeze. Remove and set stiff ant on warm stove top until thawed.

I ran this experiment successfully many times and followed up with ancient and barbaric ant sacrifices into a medium flame. After many years of experimenting, I still say that the best way to kill ants is the straightforward way. Now, before I share this I want you to know that I’m really a very benevolent guy, and that if I “sound” bell gerent about ants I’m just following the example of David the Psalmist, who hated his enemies with a perfect hate.

I interpret this to mean that it’s perfectly okay for me to hurt ants and live my little sickies with mine foot or bare fist after I have announced to them, “You’re dead!” This is extremely pleasurable, and when the righteous have saved a piece of pizza from the wicked mandibles of an ant, it is as close to a spiritual experience as some come.

Fueled by Richard Johnston (Art) in his Colton studio, the 6'x5'x10' fabricated bronze form is mounted on a concrete pedestal and weighs approximately 400 pounds. Johnston was commissioned by the university to craft the work.

Describing the sculpture, which is another gesture of goodwill between the Cal State and Yasuda universities. Johnston says, “It is a dramatically abstracted flowing form, which the metal is particularly adept at accomplishing. The material suits itself to warm, muscular types of forms.

“Imagining to create and capture the essence of flying, so it is very energetic. It has a very fine, precise finish to it in surface—there is no texture.”

The heron image was selected by the artist during his travels throughout Japan in February. His imagination was captivated by the 15th century architecture of the Castle of the White Heron. The mythology equated with that Japanese landmark pleased the Yasuda university officials, he says.

The sculpture will “serve as a symbol of the friendship between the two campuses” and will be placed in a prominent location for the fine art building. Johnston says.

The Japanese university is part of the Yasuda Institute of Education, which recently donated $925,000 to Cal State, San Bernardino for a new Extended Education classroom and conference building that will be built next year. The university has had a student and faculty exchange program for several years.

The Latin Society plays Latin-flavored oldies and big band favorites to close out university’s 1993 Summer Entertainment Series. 7 p.m. Lower Commons Plaza. Free. Ext. 7693.

The campus community extends hearty congratulations to Soncia Reagins (Student Union) who married Leslie Kyle Lilly on Aug. 7 at Lake Arrowhead Community Presbyterian Church. The newlyweds will make their home in San Bernardino.

WEDDING BELLS

The campus community extends hearty congratulations to Soncia Reagins (Student Union) who married Leslie Kyle Lilly on Aug. 7 at Lake Arrowhead Community Presbyterian Church. The newlyweds will make their home in San Bernardino.

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