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Taft College Professor Eigenauer Co-Publishes International Report on “Neuromyths” in Higher Education

Partnering with nine other higher education researchers worldwide, Taft College Professor of Philosophy John Eigenauer co-published a collaborative study in September 2019 called, “International Report: Neuromyths and Evidence-Based Practices in Higher Education” through Online Learning Consortium: Newburyport, Massachusetts.

What is a “neuromyth?” Neuromyths are false beliefs, often associated with education and learning, that originate from misconceptions or misunderstandings about how the brain functions. This study examined the awareness of neuromyths and general knowledge about the brain in higher education among researchers, instructional designers, and administrators who work with professional development in two- and four-year institutions of higher education.

A statistical analysis of survey data from 929 respondents, this study yielded a number of key findings. Five neuromyths to which respondents were most susceptible included: 1) Listening to classical music increases reasoning ability; 2) A primary indicator of dyslexia is seeing letters backwards; 3) Individuals learn better when they receive information in their preferred learning styles (auditory, visual, and kinesthetic, to name a few); 4) Some of us are “left-brained” and some are “right-brained” due to hemispheric dominance, and this helps explain differences in how we learn; and, 5) We only use 10% of our brain. All these five statements are false.

After analysis of the two-year study, Professor Eigenauer offered two takeaways that most surprised him: 1) The percentage of researchers, instructional designers, and administrators who still accept that learning styles are relevant despite being scientifically unfounded; and, 2) The percentage of these audiences who accept neuromyths in general when no empirical evidence to support them exists.

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On the importance of this research Professor Eigenauer commented, "The backbone of American higher education is research. Research advances our collective understanding in all fields. Research corrects mistakes, facilitates breakthroughs, and reorients certain elements about higher education to make it better. Most importantly, research institutions drive the economy, health advances, American culture, and our overall well-being." He also wants his fellow educators to know, "There's always more to learn even in our own academic fields."

"Taft College is certainly a valuable contributor," Professor Eigenauer continued. "Taft College feeds human improvement. We feed the research institutions in the United States. And, our research institutions represent exactly why the American higher education system differentiates us favorably from the rest of the world."

To reach Professor John Eigenauer for questions about this work or speaking engagements, visit <http://faculty.taftcollege.edu/john-eigenauer/>. For more information, please visit <http://www.taftcollege.edu>, or call us at 661.763.7700.

ABOUT TAFT COLLEGE

Established in 1922, Taft College is one of the oldest California Community Colleges. Located in Western Kern County, Taft College provides continuous learning opportunities for over 12,000 students through more than 50 vocational and professional degrees, transfer programs, and certificates. These innovative programs are made available at a fraction of the cost of state and private colleges. Proud to transform the lives of highly-diverse students and adult learners, Taft College delivers vital pathways to advanced education and enhanced employment. In 2019, Taft College was ranked 5th best Community College in California by Niche.com. In 2022, Taft College will celebrate its 100th anniversary of student success.