The Real Question: IS TUTORING WHAT MY CHILD REALLY NEEDS?

“A’s” Without Honor
Brain Workouts in the Grand Canyon State
CRANIUM corner
Exercises You Can Do To Feel the Power of Brain Training

PLUS:
MYTHbusters
askTH!NK Answers to Parents’ Most-Asked Educational Questions
LOCAL focus
PARENT speak

Tutoring VERSUS Brain Training

Your child needs you to make THE RIGHT CHOICE. Get informed.
I personally know about overcoming struggles—and experiencing success.

I understand children who struggle with reading and learning...because I was one of them. As President of LearningRx, it’s hard to believe that I spent years in the agony, frustration, and failure that comes with learning difficulties. I personally know about overcoming struggles—and experiencing success.

In elementary school, I studied 5 minutes before spelling tests and scored 100%, but failed the 6-week reviews. I couldn’t retain words in long-term memory. We were taught to read by the whole-word method, and by 4th grade, reading wasn’t easy. I couldn’t memorize the 50,000 words needed for comprehension at that age!

Though difficult, I compensated for my weaknesses. I looked for words within words and considered content to read those unfamiliar to me. Illustrations helped with comprehension. When taught a phonics program without strengthening my auditory processing skills, I still had difficulty reading and spelling. Training my weaknesses would have developed my ability to segment and blend sounds. Unfortunately, such training wasn’t available. With excessively hard work, I persevered through a professional graduate program.

Over the years I learned that I wasn’t unique in my reading struggles. Through various efforts I helped some struggling students, but knew there was more to discover.

Drawing on my own experiences and the expertise of other professionals, I co-created the cognitive skills programs that form the foundation of LearningRx today. As discoveries accumulated, our efforts generated substantial returns. Each one fueled my motivation to find processes to strengthen weak cognitive skills, and help more children achieve or exceed the academic level of their peers. These brain training programs have succeeded beyond my expectations.

By today’s standards I would have been considered dyslexic. With advancements in research and new available training, accepting such labels, settling for low learning potential, or simply compensating for learning problems is no longer necessary for today’s students. Simple testing can uncover the root cause of almost any student’s struggle. The right training can turn that weakness into a lifetime of strong learning.
Brain Workouts in the Grand Canyon State

“As an organ...the brain is...like a set of muscles, it responds to use and disuse by either growing and remaining vital or decaying, and thus, for the first time, we are learning to see mental weaknesses as physical systems in need of training and practice.”

Matt Owen, director of the LearningRx Brain Training Center in Chandler, Arizona says, “It’s amazing how much the brain can change when trained properly. Our program can produce years of improvement in just weeks.”

Owen adds, “The programs utilize brain plasticity, its ability to change and physically reshape to make it a finely tuned machine.” How do you think we learn new things and keep them in there? When you hear ‘learning’, you probably think of remembering an equation or history fact. All of those things require finely tuned skills of memory, logic and reasoning, and visualization. LearningRx is revolutionizing the way Grand Canyon state parents and students think about education.

“A’s” Without Honor

A trend toward mediocrity appears to be sweeping the nation. Michael Crowley in his article, “A is for Average,” says that some schools have 50 to 100 Valedictorians! Kids love to strive, achieve, push themselves, and earn rewards. Done in the right manner, with grace and humility, achievement will spur on everyone striving to reach higher and unlock their true potential. Protecting the self-esteem of students who are not achieving high grades, top-scorers on the court, or winning the spelling bee has become all important. Though it may sound kind, eliminating competition and high expectations do not parallel the reality of the world beyond the classroom.

The fact is, performance and results matter in the home and work environments. With the US ranked 10th in education* in the world, it’s time to rethink education, not lower the bar of performance so everyone feels good.

Why DYSLEXIA is more than just mixed up letters.

Dr. Bennett Shaywitz’s experiments show that DYSLEXIA is a reading problem caused by underlying cognitive skill weaknesses, or what he calls “faulty wiring in the brain.” Here are the top profile elements and symptoms to grasp the scope of this misunderstood learning problem.

PROFILE
1. Family history of reading problems
2. Predominant in males (8:1, M:F)
3. Average/above average IQ
4. Math proficiency not uncommon
5. No enjoyment of leisure reading
6. Poor visual memory for language symbols
7. Auditory language difficulties in word finding, fluency, meaning, or sequence

SYMPTOMS
8. Difficulty transferring what is heard to what is seen and vice versa.
9. Struggles pronouncing new words
10. Poor at distinguishing similarities/differences in words (no, on)
11. Weak at letter sound discrimination (pin, pen)
12. Low reading comprehension

NOTEWORTHY: LearningRx has developed a program to attack the root causes of Dyslexia through intense drills and procedures that eliminate reading and spelling problems, no matter the cause. Imagine the possibilities!

* McCabe, Don. To Teach a Dyslexic. AVKO Educational Research Foundation. June 1, 1996.

MYTHbusters

PARENTS, THE TRUTH IS... waiting for your child to “grow out of” learning, reading, or attention difficulties is not really an option. Learning struggles rarely go away with time. On the contrary, waiting and hoping a problem will go away without appropriate intervention will only lead to frustration, poor grades, low motivation, and time wasted in school. What should you do? If you sense a struggle, find help now before an undiscovered learning weakness permanently limits your child’s potential. There are easy, affordable steps you can take. If you fear that your child has a learning disability, the first step is to have his or her cognitive skills tested. Cognitive skills testing will uncover the source of the struggle, and guide you to a training strategy that can make the difference.

GET “MYTH-PROOF” with the facts from LearningRx or contact your local training center director: www.learningrx.com
Your child has difficulty in third grade math. You send him to a tutor. The tutor works diligently for several weeks with him on his grade-level math concepts and assignments. He goes on to pass the third grade with B’s. So far so good. Summer comes and goes. His fourth grade assignments hit, and once again, basic weaknesses prevent him from learning the new concepts. The processing and visualizing skills he needs just aren’t there. You could pay for another round of tutoring to help with these assignments as well, but the underlying reason he failed to understand them in the first place goes untouched. It will reemerge...

How do you ‘train’ someone to learn? Current learning science makes it necessary to look at learning as two distinct parts: Specific academic study and a student’s underlying ability to learn. To create the best opportunity for maximum academic progress, the underlying mental skills that lead to easy learning must be as strong and efficient as possible, and this may require specific training. Why? The brain physically changes in response to appropriate training. Its neural pathway efficiency improves in much the same way that muscle cells respond to progressive resistance training by developing added strength. The “untrained” brain that performs slowly and inefficiently (resulting in persistent sub-par learning) can become a fit brain, quick to respond when facing new learning challenges. You can literally train and strengthen your mental skills and have more brainpower!

What is Brain Training? Brain training (also known as mental or cognitive skills training) is significantly different than tutoring. Common academic study and special help (such as tutoring) both focus on specific academic tasks, and simply ignore the condition of a student’s underlying mental skills. In fact, success in general academics or special tutoring is completely dependant on the student’s underlying ability to learn. For those who struggle or fail, it is not necessarily his or her study habits or missing academic knowledge that is the problem. Underlying cognitive weakness is often the cause of the difficulty. Until the underlying skills that provide the basic ability to learn are strengthened, tutoring help can only produce temporary progress at best. Struggles WILL reemerge at the very next new challenge, and the next, and the next, until the challenges grow too difficult even with tutoring help, or the student simply gets frustrated and gives up. If this is your child, he or she is at risk of being identified as a failure by these repeated struggles. You risk paying for tutoring each and every year with absolutely no guarantee of future success.

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Tutoring Versus Cognitive Training

**Tutoring**
- One-on-one or small group “special help” in academic subject or content
- Review “missed” subject matter from classroom
- Find an instructor more gifted or knowledgeable in a subject to receive guidance of concepts taught (few are specially trained and certified)
- Increases subject-specific knowledge
- Increases related general knowledge
- Permits older students to study lower grade-level material without embarrassment
- Heightens sense of competency and improves attitude toward subject area

**Cognitive Training**
- Does for mental abilities what exercise does for the body
- Improves the brain’s ability to process information in any subject
- Enhances underlying cognitive skills required to learn effectively
- Testing uncovers underlying weakness(es) in specific cognitive skills
- Training unlocks skills that hinder comprehension, word recognition, reading, memorization, etc.
- Personalized, fun programs that use drills to improve needed skills
- Intensive; may be provided daily
- Creates confidence towards all learning tasks

**Look for Better Testing and Training Options**

It’s a misconception that the brain is a stationary mass of cells whose skills are permanently fixed.* Intense training exercises focused on specific areas of weakness can quickly strengthen key mental skills, and literally change the way a student learns. But how do you know if training is what your child needs? When looking for effective help, the right testing is also critical. Far too often a student's individual underlying skills are either not identified or are averaged and reported as an IQ score. Even when classified in terms such as “an auditory learner” or “a visual learner” this imprecise identification limits the help a student can receive. On the other hand, testing prior to skills training is designed to single out key skills that impact the learning or reading struggle. It is then possible for a qualified mental skills trainer to enhance cognitive skills such as auditory and visual processing, logic and reasoning, and working memory through direct training. The results are better academic performance almost immediately, and an enhanced ability to learn into the future.

Tutoring can benefit students in certain situations, but for those with underlying cognitive skill weaknesses, cognitive skills training is the answer. So, when you’re looking to help your child eliminate persistent struggles in school... think brain training first.

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necessary reading skills (such as sound blending and auditory processing skill) were missing, you’d have difficulty reading well no matter how much tutoring you got. Further assignments in reading theory or even practice reading wouldn’t overcome the underlying problem.

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Editor's note: If you believe there is unrealized learning potential in yourself or someone you love, a simple cognitive skills test could be the key to unlock that potential. At LearningRx, we offer such testing as a wise and affordable first step. Please give us a call today. We can answer your questions, and help test and strengthen skills that can lead to that brighter future.

LearningRx
train the brain, unlock the potential
Try these **2 SIMPLE EXERCISES** and FEEL THE POWER of training your brain

1. As fast as humanly possible, say your phone number aloud, including the area code. That's pretty simple because it's something familiar. Take a look at the learning model below. You heard the question (INPUT) and then attended to it. The phone number is stored in your KNOWLEDGE BANK, so you simply DECIDED to process the question within the ACTIVE PROCESSING SYSTEM (ATTENTION, SHORT TERM MEMORY, PROCESSING SPEED) and drew directly from the KNOWLEDGE BANK, speaking it without hesitation (OUTPUT). All this was done without engaging HIGHER THINKING.

2. Now say your phone number out loud...BACKWARDS. That's right, all 10 digits backwards! That wasn't so easy! Why? What did you do to solve the problem? Perhaps you visualized it on an imaginary chalkboard and read it last digit to first. In this case, you were forced to engage HIGHER THINKING to fulfill the task. You used the skills of REASONING to come up with a solution, LONG TERM MEMORY to recall your number, and VISUAL PROCESSING to picture the numbers. Your brain literally began to rewire, accommodating the challenge. If you did this drill multiple times, you would do more than memorize the numbers, you would actually train your HIGHER THINKING to process this type of task more quickly and efficiently. The brain is simply amazing.

### MENTAL SKILLS MODEL

Mental skills are the combination to unlock the data stored in your KNOWLEDGE BANK.

**How well you do at a NEW MENTAL TASK depends on...**

A. The strength and speed of your mental skills (Active Processing System and Higher Thinking).

B. The presence of data in your Knowledge Bank.

**Higher Thinking**
- Mental skills you use to process new information
- Solve a problem you can’t automatically process
- Interaction between long-term memory, visual processing, auditory processing, and logic/reasoning

**Knowledge Bank**
- Learned information stored by an individual through direct experiences and instruction
- Different from mental processing skills
- Stores must grow as we age
- Fills and expands with each successful learning experience

**INPUT/STIMULUS**
- Attention, short-term memory, processing speed

**ACTIVE PROCESSING SYSTEM**
- Always active and running
- Automatically handles most information we take in
- Needs to be fast and efficient
- Some information can’t be automatically processed

**DECISION**

**LEARNING & KNOWLEDGE BANK**
- Learning, writing, drawing, writing

**OUTPUT**
- Learning, writing, drawing, writing

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**TUTORING VERSUS BRAIN TRAINING**

**“WHAT IF” QUIZ**

Consider the following “what if” scenarios and choose which solution would likely be more effective, tutoring or brain training.

1. A 4th grader who keeps up, but always seems to work extra hard to do so: tutoring or training?

2. A high school sophomore who reads slowly and has difficulty sounding out words. Testing shows a difficulty blending sounds: tutoring or training?

3. An 8th grader who was doing well in algebra before missing school for three weeks due to illness and is now having a hard time catching up: tutoring or training?

4. A 3rd grader diagnosed with an attention disorder and has problems following multi-step directions: tutoring or training?

5. A 6th grader who never had difficulty in school but is now struggling after transferring to a private school with an advanced curriculum: tutoring or training?

6. A high school senior with good grades wanting every edge he can get to handle the increased competition of college: tutoring or training?
Real value comes when your investment of time, money, and energy produces big, lasting changes, fast! Students see a difference and motivation soars. With cognitive training you get four times the improvement for the same investment. LearningRx training is so effective that gains can actually be guaranteed. Why spend more time and more money without guaranteed results?

**WHY IS COGNITIVE TRAINING NOT ONLY THE MOST EFFECTIVE CHOICE, BUT ALSO THE BEST VALUE?**

*All of us are concerned about cost and budgets.* This is why it is important to consider cognitive skills training when seeking to overcome learning or reading difficulties. Learning problems diminish as cognitive skills get stronger. The chart below demonstrates the relative cost in time and money to get a 1-year gain in the key reading skill of Word Attack (one of the key skills for reading efficiently).

## Cognitive Skills Training vs. Competition

To achieve a 1-year gain in WORD ATTACK skills, each of the following programs will likely require:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>TOTAL TIME REQUIRED</th>
<th>TOTAL COST AT PER SESSION RATE OF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group Tutoring</strong></td>
<td>20 months</td>
<td>$20/hr. $4,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12 sessions per month</td>
<td>$40/hr. $9,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>One-on-one Tutoring</strong></td>
<td>12 months</td>
<td>$30/hr. $4,320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12 sessions per month</td>
<td>$50/hr. $7,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Best-Performing Non-Cognitive</strong></td>
<td>5.2 months</td>
<td>$70/hr. $4,368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading Program</strong></td>
<td>12 sessions per month</td>
<td>$100/hr. $6,240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cognitive-Based Reading Training (ReadRx)</strong></td>
<td>1.3 months</td>
<td>$70/hr. $1,092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12 sessions per month</td>
<td>$100/hr. $1,560</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**NOTES:** The chart on this page illustrates historical average gains, time requirements, and cost per program to produce one year of key reading skills gain. Prices are averaged for nationally available services. LearningRx programs are customized for each student.
Our friend said, “Go to LearningRx. Do it one place, one time, and do it right.”

At LearningRx, we combine time-tested wisdom with 21st century learning science to help students who want to excel and those who struggle with learning, reading, or attention problems.

Tutoring is naturally limited by a student’s underlying mental skills. We train and strengthen those very skills to transform a student’s ability to learn in as little as 12 to 24 weeks.

We’re the fishing lessons.
Train the brain. Unlock the potential.

Call your local LearningRx Center, or visit www.learningrx.com

For years, I knew something wasn’t right. The school said being at grade level was OK, but it wasn’t...my son, Ben, avoided reading. He’d read some, then ask us to do it for him. He’s bright, but couldn’t distinguish between vowels. The teacher said he was leaving them out of words completely!

LearningRx confirmed an auditory processing problem. Two months into the program he read in front of others for the first time! Reading held him back from everything else. I don’t know what we’d have done without training. A friend had the same weakness and spent years at different tutors and visual therapists. She said, “Go to LearningRx. Do it one place, one time, and do it right.” I can’t imagine if we hadn’t listened. Ben wouldn’t have been recommended for the Gifted and Talented program. It’s remarkable! — Leslie Jakeman

“I don’t think Ben would have made the improvements if we put all our eggs in the public school basket. LearningRx is an intense program with a big commitment from the student—and parents. There’s no way that the school can focus on one student like this program can. It’s not possible.” — Rex Jakeman

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Give a boy a fish and feed him for a day; Train him to fish, feed him for a lifetime.

Parent speak

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