

Brain Bites - Our children are the pioneers of the 21st Century Education System – November 2009

Category - 21st Century Education!

Over the last 10 years there has been an explosion of special needs children who we believe are pioneers for the “new approach to education”.

The sheer volume of these children, demands that we reconsider our approach to education, and find new, holistic ways that can serve the unique needs of the individual. Rather than “pre-packaged learning”, where the student’s brain is viewed as an empty vessel, much like a storage unit, to be filled with information, unfiltered by their own ideas, opinions and experiences.

Recently, the Toronto Star has been featuring articles on education, learning and neuroscience that we have found timely, insightful and speaks to the need for an evolution of the current education model.

One of the articles quotes Guy Claxton, author of “What’s the point of schools? Rediscovering the Heart of Education”.

He is quoted saying, “the factory model of education, which stemmed from an engineer’s assembly-line vision of efficiency, in putting together the same machine time after time, has also permeated much of the educational imagery of the early 20th century. It relied on standardization and tight quality control (aka. testing). Every student was expected to learn the same thing at the same rate, in the same way. This supposes that knowledge, can be standardized, installed in manuals called ‘textbooks’, and chopped into different size bites – syllabuses, topics, schemes of work, and eventually the content of individual lessons – **that can be bolted on, as it were, to students ‘mind’ bit by bit**”.

Does this sound familiar?

Except for Tarzan who grew up in natural terrain, most of us (adult) “Dick and Jane’s” have been through similar, compartmentalized, trenches.

For some, the system met their needs, for others, it hardly kept us engaged and we barely managed to scrape through the graduation ceremony by the seat of our pants, and many slipped through the cracks.

So, what happens today, in our modern day society when a child doesn’t fit this one-size-fits-all approach? A. the system changes to support the needs of the individual learning style or B. the child gets a label (ADHD, Autism, Dyslexia) and is treated according to the category. If you chose “B”, you are right. A gold star for you!

There are so many labels, how many more can we conjure? How long will we continue to label students until we recognize that it's the system that has to change to meet the needs of each individual, without exception?

Parents know their child's needs best, and for some, labels can have a place in providing confirmation of this knowledge. However, a label can also become a one size fits all band-aid that categorizes a problem yet does not personalize a solution.

Learning the same thing, in the same way, at the same time, isn't an effective way to ensure that the needs of each individual learning style are met, and can also impair or impede healthy neurological development.

You do not have to wait for a label in order to support your child's every day cognitive development. Labels are simply a list of areas of need that fall under a specific category. To effectively treat a label, you must go beyond it. Breaking down the label is the next step that frequently gets lost. This is done by chunking down the areas of need specific to the individual, in order to understand and clarify how they can best be supported. In this reality, labels are part of a process, not a destination.

Brain Gym® is an excellent way to offer customized learning support for the individual in a quick, easy and effective way! As well, it can be used strategically to support specific areas, such as, focus, listening, comprehension, coordination, etc.

Customized, self-initiated experience, where a student is in the driver's seat of their own learning curve, is the best teacher. Yet sadly, genuine learning moments are frequently missed because the content and delivery is not personally or emotionally relevant.

Last months (October) Brain Bites, we featured a recent Brain Gym® Journal written by Dr. Dennison, the founder of Brain Gym® International. In closing, Dr. Dennison states, " True learning has a physical component and is often completed in a matter of minutes. **The Brain Gym® activities create this kind of readiness for learning.** A skilled teacher offers a few minutes of activities, followed by a related lesson, creating a teachable moment. He recognizes the learners "A-HA" experience and allows each learning unit to come to closure, neither belabouring the lesson nor jumping prematurely into a new topic, but allowing ample time for assimilation of the input." *To read Dr. Dennison's full reprint go to [October Brain Bites 2009](#)*

By definition, the true meaning of education (Latin root, educare) is to "draw out" one's natural intelligence. Brain Gym® training, which comes from the field of work, Educational Kinesiology, teaches us how to draw out a person's skills, knowledge and resources through the science of movement, based on one's individual learning style and timing.

As we learn to develop a holistic education system based on supporting all unique learning styles, the words of Mark Twain, (who was later labelled with ADD

and left school early), "don't let school interfere with your education", will finally be history!

Jill Hewlett and Sharon Todd are both Educational Kinesiologists and Licensed Brain Gym® Trainers. Their company, Brain Works Global Inc., train clients on how to maximize their learning potential while working in conjunction with their individual goals.

They provide keynotes, in house training, and sponsored events to a wide range of organizations, schools and the community. For more information go to <http://www.brainworksglobal.com> or call 905.830.6902.