

Gifted—Not Broken

Overcoming the effects of

ADD

and Other Learning Challenges

**By Gerry Hughes, Ch.T.,
and Jennifer Means**

**Gifted-Not Broken:
Overcoming Dyslexia, ADD
and other Learning Challenges**

This booklet is intended to give the reader a new perspective on Dyslexia, ADD and other learning challenges as well as a brief glimpse into the exciting advances in education occurring at the Neuro-Linguistic Learning Center in California

Our primary goal is to provide education and resources to help children and adults overcome the effects of ADHD, Dyslexia and other sensory-based learning challenges.

**By Gerald Hughes, Ch.T.
Forward by Jennifer Means**

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and other Learning Challenges**

**Revised and updated
by
Gerald Hughes, Ch.T.**

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**Gifted-Not Broken: Overcoming Dyslexia, ADD
and other Learning Challenges** is not intended to replace sound medical advice. It is written solely for
informational and educational purposes. Always consult a health professional regarding any
physical, mental or emotional issues.

**Published by Gerald Hughes, Ch.T.
3060 Pioneer Hill Road, Placerville, CA 95667**



Dedicated to my loving wife, Lisa,
and our children Avery, Alex, Britton,
Courtney, Darian and Emily Rose.

Forward

Like myself, many parents of children with learning disabilities have struggled to understand their children. We have tried to rely on our schools for support only to be left wanting. We have looked to our health professionals for solutions only to be offered ambiguous labels or confusing diagnoses. We've been offered a variety of so-called solutions, including various drugs and medications, psychiatry, occupational therapy, outdated phonics programs, behavioral counseling and an abbreviated education—all of which left my child feeling damaged and broken.

My personal experience with the Neuro-Linguistic Learning Center was a refreshing break from the prevailing model of learning disabilities and the confusing array of theories and treatments proposed for my self and my children over the years. At the Center, my children and I were recognized and appreciated for our abilities more than our disabilities. We experienced first-hand that being different doesn't mean being broken.

With the help of Mr. Hughes and the Learning Center, we were given new and effective ways of learning and meeting the world. We were respected and understood. We were taught to understand, appreciate and respect ourselves. We were each shown that in our own unique way we were gifted and not broken.

I am truly grateful to Mr. Hughes and his work at the Neuro-Linguistic Learning Center. –
Jennifer Means

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the works of several people whose insight and dedication made possible my success in helping others in their struggles with ADD, dyslexia and other learning challenges.

First, Thomas Hartman, who wrote several texts including, “The Edison Gene: ADHD and the Gift of the Hunter Child”. Mr. Hartman’s research and his appreciation for ADHD as a gift rather than a disability sparked my own interest in finding alternatives to the current therapies offered for ADHD.

Ron Davis, Director of the Davis Institute in Burlingame, California wrote “The Gift of Dyslexia” and “The Gift of Learning”. Ron was one of the early pioneers in approaching Dyslexia as a gift rather than a disability.

Noam Chomsky, as professor of Linguistics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, developed his theory of Transformational Grammar. As published in his book, “Syntactic Structures” his theory set the stage for a radical new look into human behavior and the subsequent work of Richard Bandler and John Grinder.

Richard Bandler and John Grinder, co-founders of Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP), pioneered the use of Neuro-Linguistics in human development.

Paul E. Dennison, Ph. D., developed many of the techniques in Educational Kinesiology which are utilized daily in helping children overcome various learning challenges.

I’d also like to acknowledge several special friends and family members without whom I would not have had the courage to undertake and complete this project.

To Lisa, my wife, I’d offer special thanks for her support and understanding as well as her skills as editor and proofreader. Lisa is an accomplished administrator and musician who graduated with honors despite her own struggle with dyslexia.

To Doctor Tad James, PhD, who imparted to me his knowledge and wisdom that I may be of service to those seeking help.

To my children, Avery, Alex, Britton, Courtney and Darian, who collectively and individually inspired me and showed me the meaning of perseverance.

And, finally, my personal thanks to all the parents and children with whom I’ve worked these past years. Without your dedication, perseverance and personal commitment to overcoming your own challenges, my successes would not have been possible. – Gerald H. Hughes, ChT

Preface

Gerald Hughes spent most of his scholastic life struggling with the effects of Dyslexia and ADD. While he excelled in Math and science, his grades in Language Arts, History and most other subjects suffered terribly due to his ongoing difficulties with reading and writing as well as his classroom struggles with focus and concentration. By his Junior year, he had virtually given up on academics.

A decade passed before Gerald decided to tackle college. He majored in communications and computer science. As someone who was always interested in helping others, Gerald created his first professional coaching program in 1994. And in 2004, he began helping children with various learning challenges.

“My journey towards helping others began with my own struggles with the effects of Dyslexia, Attention Deficit Disorder. It continued with my experience as a father to six children, several of whom struggled with the effects of Dyslexia and ADHD.”

Today, Gerald is father to two children, Avery and Emily Rose and stepfather to four children, Alex, Britton, Courtney and Darian. He met his current wife, Lisa, in 1998 and they were married in September, 2006.

Lisa, herself, grew up with dyslexia as did three of her five sisters. Her oldest son, Alex was diagnosed with orthographic dyslexia in 2005. Britton, Courtney and Darian later showed signs of either dyslexia or ADD but with timely intervention they were able to avoid any serious problems in school.

Together, Lisa and Gerry researched and tried a number of tutoring approaches, phonics programs, therapies and other interventions. before finally combining several disciplines into a successful and integrated program for each of their children.

“Like many parents and those who struggled with learning challenges, I investigated many of the so-called treatments available and I tried several with limited success. What I came to realize was that many well-meaning therapists, counselors and tutors simply did not understand the complexities of these learning challenges.”

“Their supposed solutions often included extensive one-on-one tutoring, or countless hours staring at a computer screen or flipping through thousands of flashcards or numerous reviews of the rules of phonics.”

“To the dismay of myself and many others, these inappropriate treatments were simply ineffective, time-consuming and often very expensive.”

In 2006, after achieving success with his own children and several of their classmates, Gerald founded the Neuro-Linguistic Learning Center in El Dorado Hills, California. Since

then, he has been assisting both children and adults in overcoming a variety of learning challenges.

The *Neuro-Linguistic* Learning Center helps children and adults overcome many of the symptoms associated with a variety of learning challenges, including ADD/ADHD, Dyslexia, Autism, Asperger's Syndrome, Auditory Processing Disorder, SPD (Sensory Processing Disorder) and Sensory Integration Disorder.

Clients of the Neuro-Linguistic Learning Center range in age from 2 years old to 54. Their challenges may include symptoms of Dyslexia, ADD, ADHD, Autism, Asperger's Syndrome, Sensory Integration Disorder, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, fears and phobias, procrastination and many other learning challenges.

About his experience as Director of the Learning Center, Gerald says, "*Ultimately, it was my personal experience with the many children and adults who came to the Learning Center which helped provide a real understanding of these challenges and ultimately resulted in our ability to provide effective and life-changing solutions for our clients.*"

Gerald has lived in El Dorado County for the past 12 years and is father and stepfather to six children, several of whom have had their own struggles with Dyslexia, ADD and other learning challenges. He is a frequent speaker/lecturer on education and learning disabilities. He is author of the book, "Gifted--Not Broken: Overcoming Dyslexia, ADD and other Learning Challenges."

Note: It is important for the reader to appreciate that the intent of this text is not to offer detailed descriptions, definitions, and classifications for the purpose of labeling or diagnosis. Nor does it provide descriptions of the many conventional and alternative treatments for ADHD and other sensory-based learning challenges. There already exist extensive writings containing detailed information on diagnosis and treatment.

Our intent is not to debate or convince, but rather to offer for consideration, useful and practical solutions to parents, teachers and children struggling with the effects of these challenges.

Nothing in this text should be taken as a criticism of our educational system or of the medical establishment. Nothing in this book is intended to replace sound medical advice.

Rather the intent of this text is to offer hope and assistance to parents, teachers and children who have struggled with the symptoms of Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD), Dyslexia and other sensory-based learning challenges.

Gifted-Not Broken: Overcoming Dyslexia, ADD and other Learning Challenges

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Chapter 1

A Mother's Experience

In 2004, my oldest son, Teddy, a very bright and precocious fourth grader, was having more and more difficulty with school. He could spell only about 20% of his test words correctly. He hated reading and writing. In the summer of 2005, he was tested and was diagnosed as having Orthographic Dyslexia and Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD).

As a responsible parent, I immediately enrolled him with an experienced tutor to help him with his “learning disability”. But after 6 months of tutoring he had made little headway. He could still only spell 50% of his words correctly. He hated reading and writing. His self-esteem was declining and he had sunk in to a deep depression. His counselor of two years could only suggest that he be evaluated for medication.

I was desperate. I knew I had a loving, intelligent child and I knew he was falling fast. I disliked the idea of putting my son on drugs but I knew I had to do something. It was just about this time that I found the El Dorado Hills Neuro-Linguistics Learning Center.

At the Learning Center, I met Gerald Hughes and he first explained to me that dyslexia need not be looked upon as a disability. Quite the contrary, the skills exhibited by many dyslexics are exactly the skills exhibited by some of the most brilliant and creative people in our history, including Albert Einstein, Henry Ford, Nelson Rockefeller, Winston Churchill, Thomas Edison, Walt Disney and Leonardo da Vinci.

He explained that the symptoms of Dyslexia are not the result of brain damage or mental disability. The difficulties in reading, writing, spelling, mathematics, etc., are generally the result of a unique “disorientation” experienced by most dyslexics. This disorientation is actually a natural and useful problem-solving strategy when used in the appropriate context.

He also explained that many of the common symptoms of Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) are also the result of this mental disorientation.

The good news for those with dyslexia and ADD is that many of their symptoms and challenges are the result of self-generated mental strategies for processing, storing and recalling information. And these strategies are fully addressable through competent and appropriate therapy.

The bad news is that most of the current tutoring and remedial teaching methods do little more than reinforce compulsive behaviors that may eventually cripple a child for life. Rather than helping the child change the way they learn, these outdated methods rely on dumbing down the information, repackaging the information or simply force-feeding the information to the child in longer or more concentrated tutoring sessions.

Despite the inappropriateness of these teaching strategies, the child often manages to make some progress, thereby reinforcing dependence upon these inappropriate strategies. In almost all cases, however, the disorientation and resultant symptoms remain.

If, however, the disorientation is addressed and the child is taught to use appropriate learning strategies, he or she will most likely learn to read, write, and focus successfully. Letters and numbers can be relearned appropriately.

Likewise, many of the struggles generally associated with ADD are relieved once the disorientation is overcome.

After enrolling in the Neuro-Linguistic Learning Center's Visual Orientation Program, my son went from 50% accuracy in spelling to 100%.

In the following eight weeks, his reading and writing jumped two grade levels. Virtually all signs of depression disappeared and his ability to focus and pay attention in class increased dramatically. He was less stressed and his confidence and self-esteem returned. He even began to enjoy school and learning.

As for me, I enrolled in the received Sensory Integration Program which enabled me to overcome my lifelong difficulty with numbers (dyscalculia) as well as my terrible sense of direction. My sister was able to overcome her fear of bridges and heights (another common side effect brought on by the disorientation caused by dyslexia).

My second oldest son, Tanner, was subsequently diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD). I enrolled him in the Visual Orientation Program and the Sensory Integration Program and he is now doing well and performing at or above his grade level in every subject.

I cannot convey in words what the Neuro-Linguistic Learning Center has meant to our family. Homework is no longer a battle. My children and I have an entirely new basis for understanding and communicating with each other. It's as if we have been given a new life.

Chapter 2

Education and Learning

Our educational system, our culture and our environment have all undergone tremendous change in recent years. Life in the 21st Century seems to be placing more and more demands on adults and children to adapt and change.

Less than 100 years ago, 90% of Americans lived on either farms or ranches. If a child or adult struggled with a particular aspect of learning, for example reading or listening, there were plenty of other ways in which the child or adult could learn and express him or her self successfully.

Even as recent as 20 years ago, there were ample opportunities in manufacturing, construction and other hands-on type trades for these “non-verbal” learners to succeed. Many of these trades required the specific visual and spatial processing skills in which these non-verbal learners excelled.

In contrast, today’s workplace offers limited opportunity to anyone without moderate to advanced verbal and symbolic processing skills. Today’s educational system has responded by requiring extensive verbal and symbolic processing skills.

In addition, these skills are being required of children at earlier and earlier ages, hence the pressure to see children as young as 4 and 5 years old reading and writing.

Statistics show that as many as 80% of children and adults will naturally adapt to this pressure. These “verbal learners” quite naturally process the auditory (spoken) and symbolic (written) information thrust at them every day. They are served quite well by our current educational system.

However, for the remaining 20% of children and adults, this verbal/symbolic environment is a nightmare. Their excellent visual and spatial processing skills are often of little use in processing the symbolic “languages” of reading and mathematics.

In most cases, the verbal learner is well suited to classroom life while the visual learner is left to struggle with a set of skills that often don’t provide a good result in that environment.

Their ability to multi-task (parallel processing) and their reactive nature quickly often prove to be a distraction and detriment in today’s restrained and muted learning environment. And their once valued energetic and curious nature is the antithesis of modern classroom life.

Consider in today’s public educational system, more and more children are forced to spend more and more time sitting quietly in the classroom than ever before.

In today's pop culture, children (and adults) are bombarded with sensory input via television, radio, iPods, cell phones, computers and video games. They struggle with social change, increased testing and the pressures of life in the 21st century.

Meanwhile, our environment is changing at record pace. The air we breathe, the homes we live in and the foods we eat have all changed dramatically in recent years. Even now we're just beginning to learn about the health effects and long-term consequences of these changes.

Hemispheres of the Brain and Learning Styles

Left Hemisphere Approximately 80% (Auditory Learning Style)

Interested in the component parts

Detects features

Sequential Processing

Verbal thought process

Experiences the world auditorally (4 words/sec)

Experiences time as a flow of discrete moments

Analytical

Responsive

Self-control

Parasympathetic Dominant

Generally relaxed with selective Focus

Right Hemisphere Approximately 20% (Visual Learning Style)

Interested in the whole
(big picture)

Detects patterns

Holistic processing

Visual thought process

Experiences the world visually (30 Images/sec)

Experiences the past, present and future as all the same

Intuitive

Reactive

Impulsive

Sympathetic N.S. Dominant

Hyper-alert or shuts out (filters) sensory input

A simple comparison between a typical classroom environment and the two basic learning styles begins to show why there's such a marked difference in classroom performance.

So generally speaking, the children with a more auditory learning style (approximately 80%) are able to adapt reasonably well to the educational and social burdens placed on them. They are able to meet with reasonable success the requirements of the educational system and they are typically able to secure stable, gainful employment.

However, we're still left with as many as 20% of all children and approximately 10% of all adults who find themselves falling behind, failing to thrive and unable to successfully meet these new and ever-growing challenges.

In our attempt to understand and serve these children, many have been labeled, diagnosed and categorized according to various symptoms. These diagnoses almost always focus on the individual's lack of ability to succeed within the narrow context of our current educational model.



In addition to these children, many others slide along, largely unnoticed. This is often due to that fact that many of these visual learning children are highly intelligent and they very often develop their own unique strategies to survive despite being the proverbial square peg in the round hole.

The sad part is that even with diagnosis, tutoring and conventional medical treatment, many of these children continue to experience long-term learning difficulties and limited opportunities in life.

Fortunately, today, there exist a variety of therapies and interventions which are designed to meet the non-verbal child on his or her terms. We, at the Neuro-Linguistic Learning Center have developed programs that work with, rather than against, the child's natural abilities and learning processes.

The following chapters include a brief outline of some of these programs and why they are effective in helping both children and adults overcome the symptoms of these sensory-based learning challenges.



***“When you’re up to your neck in alligators,
it’s hard to remember you came there to
drain the swamp.” –Anonymous***

Chapter 3

ADD: The Hunter Child in a Farmer's World

Every Year, thousands of children are diagnosed as having Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD), Sensory Processing Disorder, Sensory Integration Disorder and various learning “disorders”.

Every year, these children and thousands like them are labeled, marginalized, ridiculed and even drugged, because they are unable to adapt themselves to certain specific situations, typically imposed upon them by the outside world and/or a rigid educational system.

Leaving aside the politics of education and the ever-increasing demands placed upon teachers, the spectrum of children effectively served by our educational system seems to be becoming more and more narrow. Every year, more and more children and adults find themselves the proverbial square peg trying to fit in a round hole. Without a suitable or receptive educational system with which to guide them, these children and their parents are often left to their own devices.

Despite the fact that many of these children exhibit above average intelligence, exceptional problem-solving skills and excellent visual and spatial processing skills, their inability to effectively process symbolic (auditory and written) information leaves them struggling within a system that completely fails to recognize or appreciate their natural gifts.

Today, the number of children and adults being diagnosed or labeled as ADHD is reaching epidemic proportions. In order to begin to understand this epidemic, we must try to understand something about these children and the symptoms used to classify someone as ADHD. To accomplish this, we will travel back in time to the world of the “Hunter Child”.

Imagine a world where there are no papers, no books, no computers and no written language. The only maps and records exist in your memory. As a Hunter Child, you have a complete mental map of the territory that you call home.

You know every path, every tree, every rock and every bush. You are acutely aware of the movements of the animals, birds and insects. You notice the subtle changes in the plants, the weather and the seasons and you effectively process that information in real time.

Physically, you are lean, active and very energetic. Your very survival depends upon your vast knowledge of your environment, your acute perception and your physical abilities.

A brief list of your abilities might include: an intense curiosity, creative, out-of-the-box thinking, the ability to create a detailed, three-dimensional, mental map of your environment, a

keen awareness, the perception to notice minute changes to that environment, quick reflexes and the need to be physically active.

In short, the Hunter Child typically is physically active with excellent visual and spatial (non-verbal) processing abilities. He is highly intelligent, quick and agile.

According to Thom Hartmann, in his book, "*The Edison Gene: ADHD and the Gift of the Hunter Child*", these are the gifts of the Hunter Child. As human beings we all possess these skills to a greater or lesser degree, however, it is these Hunter Children who seem to exhibit considerably higher than normal visual and spatial processing abilities.

Now, if we fast forward to today and observe a young Hunter Child in his crib, these non-verbal skills continue to serve him or her. Long before a child is able to effectively process verbal or symbolic information, these visual processing skills will assist the child in obtaining his immediate needs as well as keep him safe.

A typical toddler has the ability to visually "dissect" an undistinguished ball of fur and know that it is a kitten rather than a furry toy or some other object. The child is able to decode or interpret a variety of visual clues to provide him or her with a much larger understanding of the environment.

Even at 6 months of age, most children will crawl around a visual "cliff" to avoid falling. They are able to take a partial visual image such as a hand or elbow and interpret those as the safety or comfort associated with mother.

These skills will serve the child well for the first 5 or 6 years of his life. They may even serve him through Kindergarten if the curriculum is sensory-based, tactile and experiential.

However, upon entering the first or second grade, these once valued and successful strategies may not provide the same effectiveness in processing the new types of information being received by the child.

In fact, depending upon a variety of factors, some of these non-verbal skills and abilities may reveal themselves as a complete liability.

For example, the above average alertness of these children may occur as an inability to concentrate or focus on one task for extended periods (particularly when dealing with subjects that are boring or uninteresting). The child may be unable to sit still for extended periods. He or she may be easily distracted (due to an acute awareness of his or her environment).

Some visual and spatial processing abilities may even occur as an inability to effectively process the symbolic representations routinely used in language and mathematics (dyslexia, dysgraphia or dyscalculia).

As children move through the grades, the typical Elementary School curriculum becomes more abstract and more conceptual. Many non-verbal, high visual children will experience school as becoming more and more difficult. As their best efforts continue to fall short, their levels of stress and anxiety can mount on a daily basis, often resulting in frustration, loss of interest and ultimately surrender.

As some point, the child may even begin to feel betrayed by the very people who are supposed to be helping him. He will invariably begin to feel, different, broken and, eventually, dis-abled.

At the El Dorado Hills Neuro-Linguistic Learning Center, children and adults are taught to take the skills they already have and use them in different ways. In some cases, they adopt new strategies to complement their existing skills.

The result is that these formally “dis-abled” persons, are now able to effectively learn and participate where previously they struggled.

Chapter 4

Struggles and Limitations

Non-verbal children and adults have a very different way of relating to themselves and their world. In a very real way, they are the proverbial square peg being forced to fit into a round hole.

In their struggles to adapt themselves to a world which does not seem to understand their needs or their abilities, the non-verbal child will invariably begin to exhibit a variety of behaviors designed to compensate for their lack of ability or for their “dis-abilities”.

In general, non-verbal or sensory-based learning challenges may include some or all of the following symptoms:

Difficulty reading and/or writing:

The non-verbal learner may have difficulty decoding symbolic information. In some cases, the excellent visual and spatial abilities of the non-verbal learner may interfere with their ability to process letters, numbers and punctuation. This may occur as difficulty with reading, reversing or flipping letters or numbers, poor handwriting and difficulty with memorization.

Difficulty with mathematics:

While many non-verbal learners may struggle with processing symbolic information, others may struggle with order and sequence. Math problems (like long division) that require more than 2 or 3 steps may confound the visual learner.

Inability to focus or pay attention: The child or adult is constantly being distracted from the task at hand. Simple tasks, homework, for example, may take several hours instead of 30-40 minutes because of the interruptions caused by an above average awareness and higher susceptibility to stress. While visual learners may be easily engaged by intense or active visual stimuli, the auditory/verbal nature of a typical classroom is the antithesis of how these children are engaged.

Difficulty with long-term memory: This forgetfulness occurs particularly with verbal instructions. Visual learners may have difficulty processing the individual phonemes that make up our spoken language. They may also remember only one out of three or four instructions given in sequence. They may even start to do something but then get distracted and move on to something else, forgetting about the original task.

Lack of organization: Disorganization, forgetfulness, inability to remember sequential tasks and difficulty following through or completing tasks is often the result of the dynamic or holistic thought processes of the visual learner.

Impulsivity: Non-verbal children and adults often appear impulsive because of their ability to quickly jump from one internal image to another. Rather than mentally process through a course of action (or sequence of actions) logically (audit orally), they may develop a see-it, feel-it response, also known as a visual/kinesthetic synesthesia.

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder: In some cases, visual learners may exhibit obsessive-compulsive behaviors, repetitive behaviors, difficulty with changes in schedule, etc.

Procrastination: Because they become bored easily and have trouble completing tasks, they may experience a great deal of criticism and failure (either real or perceived). This may lead to reluctance to even get started on new projects.

Hyperactivity: If there were ever an attempt to fit a square peg into a round hole, it is asking a high visual, non-verbal child to sit passively in a classroom and listen without responding or reacting.

The difficulty with sitting still, particularly in the classroom, is common for many high energy, non-verbal learners (often labeled ADHD). This struggle is most often seen when they are bored and are desperately trying to create some additional stimulation for themselves.

Lack of Social Skills: Sometimes, the quantity of non-verbal (visual) information being processed internally becomes so overwhelming that the only viable solution is to block out some or all of the external sensory information. This may occur as an inability to form “normal” social relationships or an inability to understand and appropriately respond to social cues.

Oppositional Defiance: High visual, non-verbal children often have strong sense of themselves and the way things should be. They may have difficulty adjusting to transitions or directions that conflict with their own ideas of what should happen next. Their reactions to these conflicts may occur as an apparent disrespect for authority, defiance, insolence and disobedience.

Frustration, Stress and Anxiety: As non-verbal children move out of the “real” world of hands-on play (pre-kindergarten) and into the conceptual, abstract world of Elementary School, many will experience growing levels of stress and frustration as their efforts begin to fall short and they begin to feel more and more like the proverbial square peg in the round hole.

Test-anxiety, unwarranted rage, panic attacks and abuse of drugs and/or alcohol, are just a few of the behaviors that may manifest as frustration and anxiety grow.

Chapter 5

Every Behavior Has a Positive Intention

Parents and teachers need to understand and appreciate that the symptoms of these “disabilities” are often the result of the specific processes by which the non-verbal (high visual) person relates to himself and his world. Many of these challenges can be overcome with appropriate treatment and patient coaching.

A concept even harder to grasp is that the behaviors exhibited by these children are in no way arbitrary, random or capricious. However seemingly bizarre, every behavior has, beneath it, an intention. An intention that, from the conscious or unconscious perspective of the individual, is intended to protect, make right or in some way further the survival of the individual.

When these behaviors appear to be self-destructive, hurtful to others, or simply beyond rational thought, it is most difficult to accept the possibility of some underlying positive intention. From *our* perspective, the behavior makes no sense. Our logic tells us that the child is just being mean, or difficult or irrational.

Unfortunately, these conclusions can only result in conflict. We have very little chance of resolving the situation peacefully or diplomatically because we have no appreciation for the other person’s point of view. We have completely dismissed the child’s perspective in favor of our own.

Am I suggesting that we abandon our own logic and experience that we have come to rely on and simply accept the perspective of the child? Absolutely not. That would be ridiculous and would probably not produce long-term fruitful results.

What I am suggesting is that if we, as parents or teachers or guides for these children can begin to accept the possibility that there is a positive intention underlying the child’s behavior we open the door to a new model of discipline that respects the child while more effectively eliminating the unwanted behavior.

This approach actually works with adults as well. The quickest route to resolving any conflict is to first acknowledge the needs or intentions of both parties and then find a solution (or behavior) that satisfies the needs and intentions of both parties.

As long as the focus is on the behaviors of the parties, there is nothing to agree on and there is little hope of resolving the conflict. When we focus on the behavior of the child and we make them wrong for it, we are simply backing them into a corner where they must defend the behavior. We are forcing them to take up an opposing position. We are virtually guaranteeing their absolute defiance.

Again, if we acknowledge the positive intention (or need) and we separate that intention from the behavior, we now open the door to cooperative solutions. We open the door to changing the negative behavior while maintaining a supportive, positive relationship with the child.

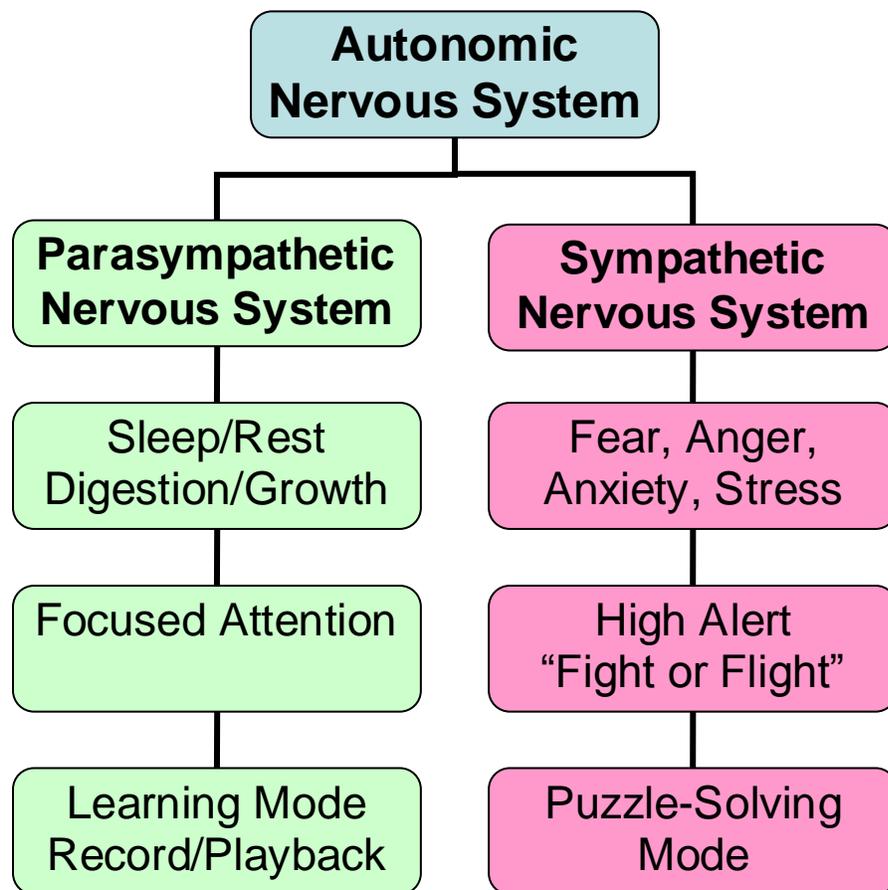
With this approach, there is no need for the child to take up a defiant or defensive position because we're not making the child wrong. We are honoring and respecting the child (and, believe me) they know the difference.

In his seven habits, Steven Covey talks about synergy and finding creative solutions. When we acknowledge and respect the person (or child), we open the door to cooperative and long-term solutions that simply do not present themselves otherwise.

Chapter 6

Overcoming the ADD Stress Response

Many of the symptoms of ADD, ADHD and other sensory processing disorders are the result of an above average or “abnormal” stress response. While this above average response may actually help the individual perform in certain situations, i.e., sports, video games, etc., we can see that the stress response is detrimental to effective learning and is of little or no benefit to the student in a typical classroom environment.



Unfortunately, many parents have been convinced by their child’s teacher or Doctor that medication is the only strategy for mitigating the negative effects of the stress response.

Extensive research has shown that medication can have a positive effect on many children with ADHD. However, medication is never a cure-all and parents must weigh the cost of life-long-medication, possible weight loss, sleep disruption, mood changes and other side effects against the immediate benefits offered by the drugs.

For some children, the side effects can be so pronounced that they wind up taking a daily cocktail of neuro-stimulants and psychotropic medications just to get through the day.

An important thing to note at this time is that medication is a partial fix at best. Medication can not and will not change the fundamental learning style of a child or magically provide him with the various skills needed to succeed socially or academically.

The good news for parents wrestling with the question of medication is that there is typically no conflict between taking medication and receiving the types of coaching offered at the Neuro-Linguistic Learning Center. As long as a child is alert and aware during his coaching, he can still receive the benefits from coaching at the NLC.

As an aside, there are no known side effects from learning to use new strategies for processing information or from learning to monitor and control your own stress response. There are, however, long-term benefits to these mental disciplines and many parents report that for some children medication becomes unnecessary after this type of training.

Chapter 7

Gifted—Not Broken: Beyond the Struggle

Of all the lessons we've learned at the Neuro-Linguistic Learning Center, the most important seems to be that no two children or people are alike. Every person has his or her own strategies for storing, processing and remembering various types of sensory input (information). Every individual has his or her own motivations, gifts and challenges.

For this reason, every potential client is evaluated to determine their own unique strategies for learning and processing information. NLC Learning Specialists tailor the curriculum and coaching to meet the specific needs of the child.

Every evaluation begins by listening to the experiences and challenges of the person. It is a person's own personal experience of himself and the world around him that often provides the most valuable information. Very often it is the parents who have had the greatest opportunity to see and appreciate a child's gifts first-hand.

After the various struggles, symptoms and complaints are explored, the "gifts" of the particular learning challenge are explained in gentle and understandable terms. It's often a great relief and comfort to parents and children to discover that they are not broken and that they are not alone in their struggles.

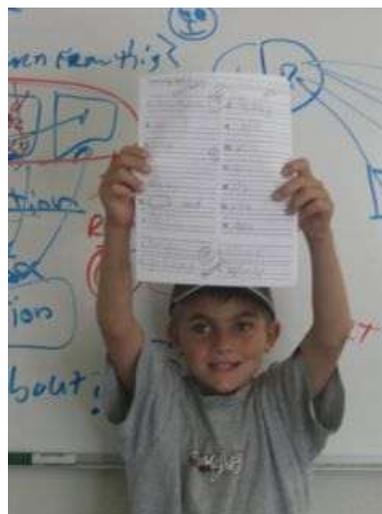
Understanding the gifts that the child brings is critical to effective treatment. It is his or her abilities, rather than dis-abilities, which hold the key to effective learning, understanding and growth.

Again, these abilities might include: an intense curiosity, creative, out-of-the-box thinking and excellent visual and spatial (non-verbal) processing abilities.

Both Auditory and Visual processing skills are evaluated and the client is assessed for brain dominance. Clients are evaluated on their ability to focus and concentrate.

A typical evaluation may include tests for eye-tracking, sensory integration, visual orientation and the child's ability to process information across the midline. These abilities are critical to effective reading, writing and information processing.

Potential clients are observed as they are asked various questions and as they view various shapes. Their responses help determine how and when the two halves of the brain function best.



Good communication between the right brain and the left brain is critical to regulating behavior as well as converting short-term memory into long-term memory.

If there is a reasonable basis to conclude that one or more of the therapies used at the Learning Center will effect a positive change, the person will be invited to enroll in one or more of the programs at the Learning Center.

Chapter 8

Overcoming Learning Challenges in the 21st Century

For the past 100 years tutoring has been the standard approach to help children struggling in school. For many of these children, tutoring was a Godsend—it provided a fresh look at the problem, a one-to-one student/teacher relationship and, typically, a quiet, undisturbed atmosphere in which to learn.

However, for a growing number of students in the 21st Century, tutoring has proven to be time-consuming, frustrating and painfully ineffective. While many of these children struggle with challenges such as Dyslexia or ADD, many more have no official diagnosis and no significant challenges outside of the classroom.

Of those students that received extensive tutoring, many showed little or no significant improvement. And for many of these students, tutoring became a way of life, continuing on for years. It begs the question, “Is there a 21st Century solution to the struggles being faced by these 21st Century students?”

The answer is an undeniable, “Yes!” Rooted in 30 years of research and practical application, the combined fields of Neuro-Linguistics, Neuro-Kinetics and Neuro-Sensory instruction are helping today’s students apply their talents and abilities to make learning easier, faster and even more fun.

At the Neuro-Linguistic Learning Center, students are taught to improve their focus and concentrate, reduce their stress, organize their thoughts, manage their time, set goals and self-motivate. Essential learning skills like speed-reading, advanced memorization, writing composition, test-preparation and test-taking, enable these children to succeed where many previously failed (even with extensive tutoring).

Children must be given the skills to succeed in this century. And like the horse and buggy, it’s time lay aside those tired old flash cards, outdated phonics programs and other 19th Century tutoring methods. It’s time to offer these children 21st Century solutions to their very real 21st Century struggles.

If we step back for a moment, we see that ADHD, Dyslexia and a variety of other sensory-based learning challenges, have traditionally been characterized as “learning disabilities”. That dubious distinction is no doubt due to the fact that many of those children and adults with a

more non-verbal, right-brain learning style do experience significant learning and social challenges.

Unfortunately, the abilities of these non-verbal learners are often completely overshadowed by their dis-abilities. As a result it is the presupposition of dis-ability that now serves as the context for most of the current therapies and tutoring methods intended to “help” or teach these non-verbal learners.

The fundamental flaw in treating the non-verbal learner as disabled rather than gifted is that it pre-supposes that the non-verbal child is broken and needs to be fixed. It also places the focus of any treatment on the limitations of the child rather than his strengths.

This is analogous to using a hammer to drive a screw or using a screwdriver to drive a nail. You might get there eventually, but you’d have much better results if you simply learned to use the right tool for the job. In educational terms it’s simply trying to force the child into using a strategy for learning which is completely inappropriate for them given their particular gifts and limitations.

For these non-verbal children, the typical teaching and tutoring methods are a perfect example of using the wrong tool for the job. They also set the conditions for a relationship between the student and the teacher that is inherently adversarial in nature. The student is wrong—broken. He or she must be fixed, changed, suppressed, overcome, and conquered.

Conversely, the paradigm that right-brain, non-verbal children and adults are gifted, not broken, honors the child and the gifts that he brings to the learning table. It opens the door to a positive and cooperative relationship between the student and the teacher. Rather than being distracted by the limitations or situational behaviors of the child (the alligators), it focuses on the strengths of the non-verbal child and his natural abilities to learn and his real purpose and intent which is to learn and grow.

Chapter 9

Beyond Tutoring: Tools for the 21st Century

Over the years, several methods have evolved which enable us through competent and patient coaching to alter the way a person processes information, thereby changing their personal experience of the world and effectively modifying their behavior. This “behavior modification” can be seen in the form of stress reduction, increased focus and attention, organization and increased memorization, to name just a few.

Most importantly, these methods allow us to embrace the paradigm that non-verbal (ADHD) children are gifted, rather than broken. These methods, by their very nature, work with, rather than against, the child’s natural abilities.

In order to achieve a basic understanding of these methods, we will provide a brief history and explanation of these methods.

Transformational Grammar

In 1960, Noam Chomsky, the Professor of Linguistics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, published a brief volume entitled, “Syntactic Structures. In this text, Professor Chomsky outlines a new model for human behavior and language development entitled Transformational Grammar.

In this model, Professor Chomsky proposed that our language patterns were correlated to our *subjective experience* of the world rather than our *objective experience*. This subjective experience was shown to be directly related to identifiable and predictable thought processes whereby the sensory information of an objective experience is systematically deleted, distorted and/or generalized to create our subjective experience of ourselves and our world.

Neuro-Linguistics

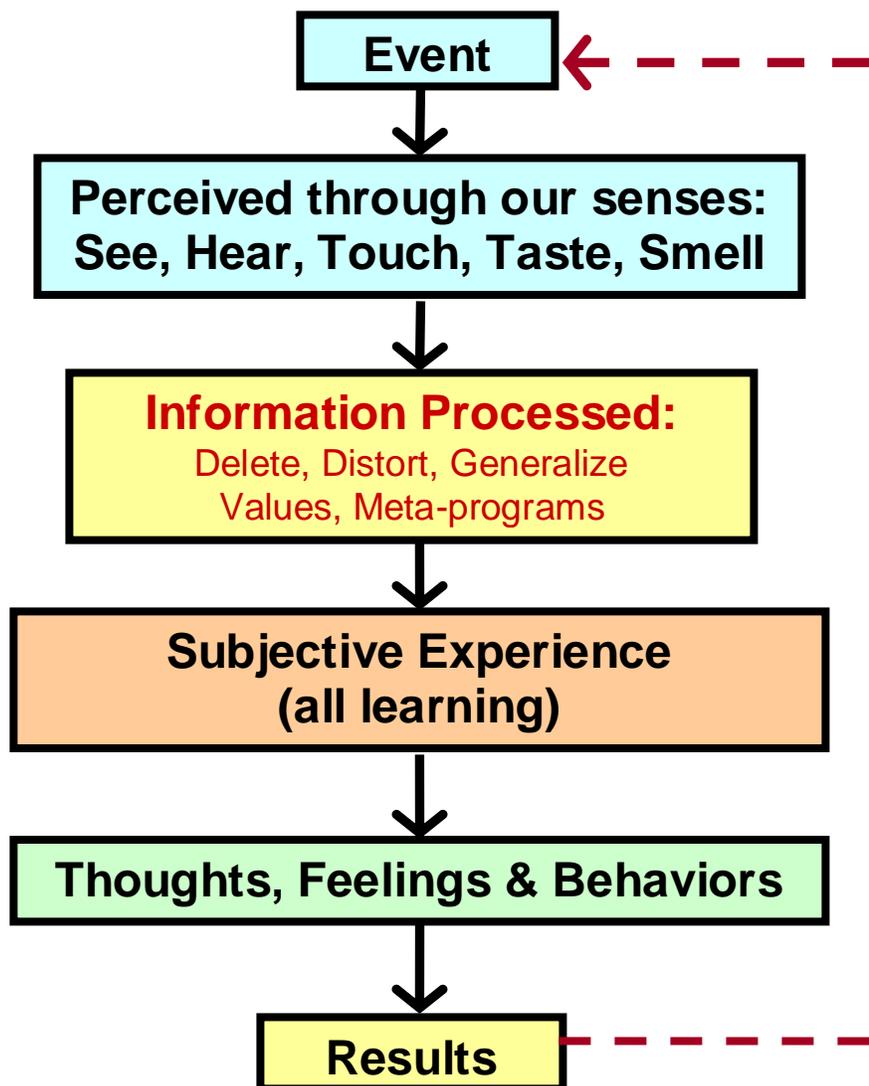
For over 30 years, Neuro-Linguistics has been utilized by practitioners and professionals in the treatment of a wide variety of ailments and conditions, including obesity and addictions, fears and phobias, negative emotions, learning disabilities and other interventions.

Neuro-Linguistics, as a model, describes how we, as human beings, process, store and retrieve sensory input. Via the five senses, the human body receives over two million bits of information per second. Out of those two million bits, the human brain can consciously process only about 137 bits of information per second.

In order to process and condense that massive amount of information, the mind has evolved sophisticated mechanisms, or strategies, to delete, distort and generalize that input until it arrives at the 137 bits of information that is consciously processed and stored “in mind”.

It is this small portion of the total experience that provides the basis for our subjective experience of the world and it is this subjective experience that determines our behaviors and responses.

Because many of the symptoms of ADHD and sensory-based learning challenges are the result of inappropriate strategies for selecting and storing information, Neuro-Linguistics provides powerful tools for overcoming many sensory-based learning challenges.



The above illustration shows us that it is how we process sensory information determines our subjective experience as well as what and how we learn. That learning results in our thoughts, feelings and behaviors.

If we change the way we process sensory information, we change our subjective experience (our learning) and, therefore, change our thoughts, feelings and behavior.

Neuro-Sensory Instruction

In Neuro-Sensory Instruction one or more elements of a person's sensory experience are fed back to him as a conscious awareness. As the person changes or adjusts his behavior, these adjustments are fed back to the person as they occur.

In working with ADD and ADHD, Neuro-Sensory Instruction can quickly help a child to modify his behavior, mitigate his stress response and improve his ability to focus.

Neuro-Kinesis

Neuro-Kinesis includes a variety of diagnostic tools as well as practical techniques to help alleviate some symptoms of ADHD, Dyslexia and other sensory-based learning challenges.

If the child exhibits certain sensory integration issues or difficulties processing information across the midline, Neuro-Kinesis can be helpful.

Again, these general descriptions are not intended to fully explain the complexities of the various learning challenges or their respective treatments. Rather they are intended to help make the reader aware of at least some of the complexities in dealing with the various learning challenges and need for personalized, rather than "off-the-rack" learning programs.



Chapter 10

Supercharge Learning

The following is a checklist of essential learning skills. These skills are the NLC benchmarks for effective learning.

- ✓ **Stress Reduction**
- ✓ **Focused Attention**
- ✓ **Increased Organization**

- ✓ **Understand Your Learning Style**
- ✓ **Utilize Effective Learning Strategies**

- ✓ **Speed Reading and Reading Comprehension**
- ✓ **Advanced Memorization**
- ✓ **Effective Note-taking**
- ✓ **Writing Composition**
- ✓ **Mental Math (for speed and accuracy)**
- ✓ **Effective Test Preparation and**
- ✓ **Test-taking Strategies**
- ✓ **Time Management**
- ✓ **Self-Esteem and Confidence**
- ✓ **Goal Setting / Self-Motivation**

By utilizing the latest techniques in Neuro-Linguistics, Neuro-Kinesis and Neuro-Sensory Instruction, Learning Specialists at the NLC are able to help children and adults utilize their natural abilities and acquire the skills they need to succeed in the classroom and in life.

The children who come to the NLC have demonstrated time and time again that when given the right tools, virtually every child can grow and learn.

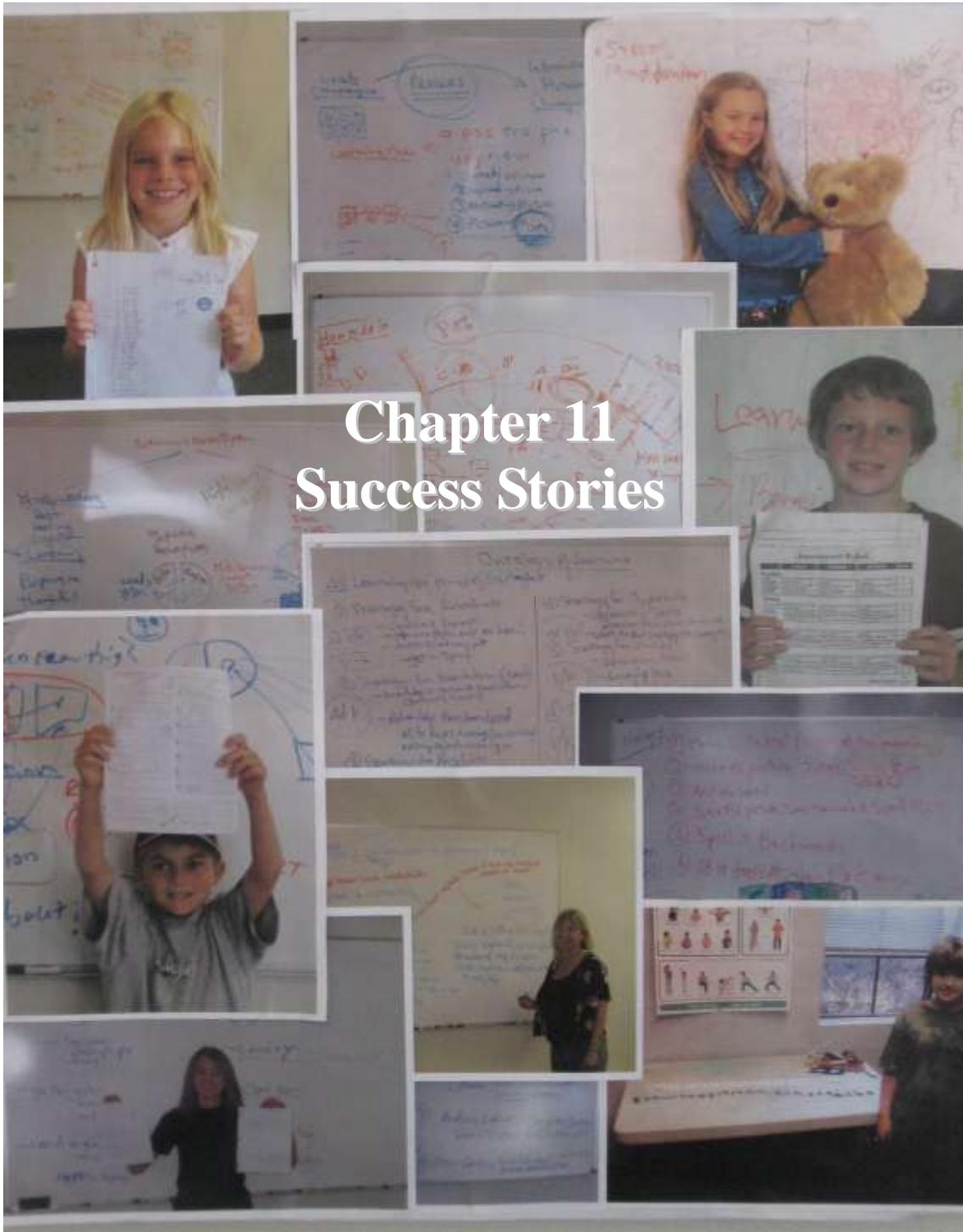
What is often most troubling to parents is when they see their child struggling day after day in school and they know in their hearts that the child is intelligent and creative.

It's even more discouraging when the teachers and the school systems say there's nothing more that they can do and the child is left to struggle.

At the NLC we see the potential in each and every child. Every one of our individualized programs is specifically designed to help each child reach his or her potential.

By working patiently and diligently with both parent and child we begin by building a solid foundation for learning using the child's natural gifts and abilities. As the child grows in confidence and capability, we add more skills and more advanced learning strategies.

Always beginning with the presumption that learning is a natural process and that every child has the capacity to learn and grow, NLC Learning Specialists can focus on giving each child those essential learning skills that can supercharge learning and even help make learning easy, fast and more fun.



The following stories are just a few of the success stories at the Neuro-Linguistic Learning Center. Please note that many of the names have been changed and some personal details have been omitted to maintain privacy.

“Daniel”

Daniel and I met when he was sixteen. He was being home schooled by his Mother “*because he simply could not cope with public school*”. Daniel seemed to have given up on himself. He was reluctant to interact with people and knew he was “different.” Daniel’s biggest issue was dysgraphia (poor handwriting). He struggled with reading, comprehension and retention. Daniel’s most recent GPA was 1.9.

Daniel and I met two hours a week for eight weeks. During the first four weeks, we spent about half the time dealing with his dysgraphia and the other half we focused on his self esteem, his confidence and his motivation.

We dealt with his dysgraphia using the Sensory Orientation Program and the Symbols Master Program. We also taught him several memorization and test-taking strategies.

Because of Daniel’s age and his progress in the first 4 sessions, we spent the last four sessions developing both his print and cursive handwriting skills. We also taught him the more advanced memory techniques, test-taking strategies and visual goal-setting techniques.

At eight weeks, Daniel’s reading and comprehension had increased by more than one full grade level. With his new, visual learning strategies, his GPA for the new semester jumped to 3.6. His confidence and self-esteem had also returned.

It was particularly rewarding to see that, by the end of the eight weeks, Daniel had set entirely new goals for himself, including completing his high school requirements and going on to junior college. He was also spending much less time playing computer games and more time practicing his guitar and engaging in more social activities.

“Emily”

I met Emily when she was ten. Her biggest struggle was with oral reading and her lack of confidence. She had trouble keeping her place when she read and sometimes the words seemed to move on the page. Emily’s evaluation showed significant midline issues, signs of dyslexia and eye-tracking problems.

Emily and I met one hour a week for eight weeks during which time we focused on her confidence, self esteem and developing her reading skills. Emily was extremely bright and was a joy to work with. She was mildly dyslexic so we used the Sensory Orientation Program and the Symbols Mastery Program.

Because Emily had a mild eye tracking problem and definite midline issues, her homework consisted mostly of Educational Kinesiology and eye tracking exercises.

By the end of the eight weeks, Emily’s confidence had returned. She read aloud with pride and easily remembered what she read.

As an aside, we taught Emily the advanced spelling and visual memory strategies and from then on she consistently scored 100% on her spelling and vocabulary tests. Emily's excellent progress was no doubt due to her cheerful attitude and her newfound passion for learning.

“Teddy”

I met Teddy for the first time when he was only 6. He had been diagnosed as severe ADHD and his mother was struggling with a variety of behavior problems. Teddy was taking medication for his ADHD and attended school as part of a special education program.

I performed a basic evaluation on Teddy but did not see him for several weeks. Then, one evening, his Mother called me in a panic because she had been given an ultimatum by the school's principal: she either had to find a solution to his disruptive behavior or Teddy could not return to school.

Fortunately, I was able to see Teddy the following morning. I scheduled him to come in for two hours prior to his going to school later that day.

As I spoke to his mother, Teddy was literally bouncing off the walls, crawling under the desk and touching everything he could reach. His mother insisted on leaving her cell phone number “in case I couldn't handle him”.

The first challenge with Teddy was getting him to engage. I put on some music and began crawling on the floor “like a tiger in the jungle”. From watching Teddy crawl, it was again apparent that Teddy had significant midline issues.

Little by little I was able to engage Teddy in more challenging activities (double-doodling, sitting quietly and listening to a story and, finally, sitting quiet and focused for almost 30 minutes).

You should have seen the expression on his Mother's face when she walked in and saw Teddy sitting “as quiet as a mouse and as solid as a rock”.

Teddy left that first session and had a great day at school that day and the following three. He was settled, attentive and (for the most part) cooperative.

Over the next several weeks, Teddy and I met for two hours once a week. Teddy resisted some of his exercises, but with a bit of creative thinking, we found a combination of exercises that Teddy could accept and complete daily.

Every child is unique and Teddy was no exception. Over the course of his treatment we invented numerous variations on our Sensory Integration Program and our E-K exercises to keep him engaged and challenged.

The length of time that Teddy was able to comfortably sit still and focus, gradually grew longer and longer. His hearing (listening) improved and he began to have a much better sense of himself and others around him. He even became excited about going to school and exhibited much less resistance to being guided (i.e., told what to do).

Even after eight weeks he still had some difficulty with transitions, but most of the time he was cheerful and willing to engage in new activities. His mother continued to limit Teddy's exposure to video games and TV and instead spent time reading to him aloud and helping him with his exercises.

Working closely with his physician, his Mother was gradually able to discontinue all medications. The following year, Teddy was able to return to normal classroom activities.

“James”

James was a bright boy about eleven. When his parents brought him to the Learning Center he had difficulty with focusing and paying attention. He had been diagnosed as moderate ADD. His parent's biggest concern was that he was falling behind in school, particularly in reading comprehension and spelling.

At our initial meeting, James was friendly but sad. We got through the evaluation within the hour but for much of the time James was distracted and seemed unable or unwilling to focus on any particular task for more than a minute or two.

James' parents were divorced and like many children his life was split between two completely different houses, each with its own set of rules and its own set of expectations. James was constantly adjusting to these different conditions, rules and expectations.

We began with the basic therapies for reading and spelling. We started with the Sensory Orientation Program, strategies for spelling and Educational Kinesiology.

During the first eight weeks, James and I met for one hour a week and he made little progress during this time. He resisted the exercises and seemed to lack even a basic motivation to succeed (without the threat of punishment from his father).

It was clear that we needed to change strategies. The first thing we did was change to a new spelling program and we changed James's daily exercises to a routine that kept him engaged. We also changed his visits from one hour a week to two hours bi-weekly.

I also spoke with both his mother and father about the importance of his daily exercises. We discussed nutrition and specific activities which were possibly contributing to James' struggles. We agreed that there needed to be reasonable restrictions placed on the time that James spent watching TV and playing video games.

It was about the twelfth week of coaching that we really noticed a significant improvement in James' performance. He was reading faster and his comprehension was greatly improved. James had recently taken a spelling test and missed only one of 30 words. He was also beginning to enjoy reading for fun and, while he still preferred engaging in activities of his own choosing during our sessions, he was able to demonstrate increased focus and attention.

Probably the most rewarding breakthrough came when James announced that he actually like school again. Quad-riding was still his preferred activity, but school had become something to be valued. In addition, his competitive nature and his desire to be good at what he did helped bring a new motivation to his school work.

“Martin”

Martin began his coaching with the Learning Center when he was 16. Martin was a Junior in High School with a GPA of 2.4. His special talents included the ability to fix almost any type of vehicle and build amazing pieces out of metal or wood.

Martin's chief struggle was with reading and writing. He had difficulty processing and remembering auditory information (particularly lectures), and he'd lost much of his interest in school.

I never actually met Martin in person. Since he lived out of state, we conducted all of our sessions over the telephone. Martin's mother acted as his surrogate coach and supervised his participation and progress.

We began our long-distance sessions in December over the Christmas break. In mid-January, Martin's grades for the previous semester came out and, again, were just above a “D” average, 2.2 GPA.

By the time we completed our last Saturday telephone session in mid-February, Martin had taken his fourth test in the new semester. To Martin (and his mother's) great joy and surprise, Martin had not missed a single question on three of the four tests. He received 100% on three of the four tests and 88% on the fourth.

Martin is thoroughly excited about learning and now plans on going to college in California to earn a degree in engineering.

“Sarah”

Sarah came to me from Southern California. Her parents brought her up because of her severe difficulty with reading and spelling. I worked with Sarah at the Learning Center only twice for 4 hours.

When they returned home, her Mom acted as surrogate coach. And we corresponded via email and telephone. After eight weeks, Sarah was reading, writing and spelling at grade level.

Below is an email I received from Sarah’s mother four weeks into her program:

Hi Gerry:

Good, no... G R E A T news!!! Sarah got 20 out of 20 of her spelling words CORRECT today – isn’t that awesome? I knew she’d do well, but 100%? W O W!!!!!!!!!!!!

We’ve got a lot of catching up to do to cover her 1,000 sight words that she still can’t spell, but we’ll start with the 200 some odd words in the book you gave me first and take it from there. I don’t want to hold her to a standard of perfection, but boy, what a start!

I feel so blessed to have found you, Gerry. I swear it was a divine intervention because I can’t find the reference on the Internet to you where I was looking before I found you. Don’t worry; news of what you have to offer is already beginning to spread on the central coast – by me! If what you’ve done for Sarah in this short a period of time is something you can offer to other children then, my God, what a legacy you have the opportunity to leave on this earth!

I thank God for you. Have a blessed weekend.

...Patricia

These are just a few success stories from the many children and adults who have overcome their learning disabilities at the Neuro-Linguistic Learning Center. All the names have been changed and all personal details have been omitted to maintain privacy.

The intention here is to help parents understand that progress and success are not as far off as they may have thought. These flexible programs allow children to progress at their own pace and utilize their natural gifts in new ways which allow them to succeed and grow.

Chapter 12

Early Warning Signs for At-Risk Children

Every day, the Neuro-Linguistic Learning Center works to assist children in overcoming a variety of sensory processing disorders, including Dyslexia, Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), Attention Deficit/Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD), Auditory Processing Disorder, Sensory Integration Disorder, Asperger's Syndrome, Autism and Pervasive Developmental Disorder Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS).

In working with these children, we've realized that many of the difficulties that these children experience later in life could have been prevented or significantly lessened with simple, early treatments. These early treatments can begin long before conventional diagnosis is possible.

The reason for this is that early in life, children develop specific mental patterns (strategies) for processing various types of sensory information. These strategies, when employed successfully by the child in specific circumstances can become generalized to situations where they may not be effective.

In addition, as children grow, they may develop particular solutions to situations when their primary strategy is ineffective. These solutions often become compulsive behaviors which are often of little or no practical use later in the child's life. The combination of the inappropriate use of mental strategies and the development of compulsive behaviors can severely impact a child's effectiveness.



While conventional diagnosis may not be possible until a child is older, identifying a child's learning style at an early age (2-6) can allow for early intervention and greater success. Some of the characteristics of at-risk children include:

- Delayed speech or language skills
- Difficulty processing auditory information
- Unusual or delayed social behaviors
- Difficulty with transitions from one activity to another
- Above Average visual or spatial awareness
- Above average intelligence
- Eye tracking problems
- Delayed midline integration
- Delayed fine or gross motor skills
- Difficulty with reading or reading comprehension
- Dislikes reading but enjoys being read to
- Stutters
- Forgetful, difficulty remembering
- Avoids eye contact
- Frequently tunes out what's happening
- Watches what others are doing or needs to see gestures before following directions
- One or both parents having Dyslexia, ADD or other sensory processing disorders
- One or more grandparents, siblings or other close relatives having Dyslexia, ADD or other sensory processing disorders

Children with two or more of these characteristics may be at-risk for some type of specific sensory processing issue.

The good news is that early intervention can help alleviate many of the difficulties that are often the result of sensory processing or sensory integration issues.

The Neuro-Linguistic Learning Center recently introduced its Early Childhood Neuro-Sensory Development Program for at-risk children. The program is designed to assist parents in identifying young children, ages 2 to 6, who are at-risk for developing specific sensory processing problems.

The program also provides specific interventions for at-risk children. Many of the children who come to the Learning Center could have been spared years of struggle had they simply been given appropriate instruction early on in their lives.

Chapter 13

Summary

Obviously, this brief text was not intended to answer everyone's questions about learning challenges. The complexities of these various conditions and the challenges they present is beyond the scope of any single text. Our primary intent was to offer hope to those struggling with the effects of sensory-based learning challenges.

For many, this text may have sparked more questions than it answered. While that may not leave some readers feeling comfortable it is our hope that their new inquiry may lead to new opportunities and new hope for themselves and others.

Again, it was not our intention to provide any opinion or advise regarding any behavior or condition which may warrant or require medical attention. Anyone reading this book who suspects a behavior or condition which may warrant or require medical attention should immediately seek the advice of a competent, licensed medical practitioner.

To any person who is currently under the care of a physician, counselor, psychotherapist or medical professional, always consult your practitioner or medical care provider before embarking on any new program or therapy.

Chapter 14

Final Word to Parents

To all parents: You are the authority in your child's life. You are ultimately responsible for your child's growth and development. It is again our sincere hope that this book leave every parent with the realization that no child need ever be left to struggle with the effects of Dyslexia, ADD or any other sensory-based processing disorder—that no child or adult need be marginalized, ostracized or suffer through endless hours of inappropriate teaching or tutoring methods simply because they are different.

Whatever a person's struggle or difficulty, be it with ADD, Dyslexia, Autism, Asperger's Syndrome or other sensory processing disorder, our commitment is to help each person make the most of his or her natural gifts and rediscover the joy of learning, to not only survive in the world, but thrive in it.

For that reason, every child and adult who comes to the Learning Center is evaluated for his abilities as well as his challenges. Our success is in assisting each person, child or adult, in making the most of his or her natural abilities and helping each person understand and appreciate the unique talents and gifts that he or she brings to the world.

At the Neuro-Linguistic Learning Center our primary goal is that all those who enroll in our programs graduate not only with their new skills and abilities but with the very real understanding that he or she is gifted—not broken.

The Animal School

Once upon a time, all the animals got together and decided that they must do something to prepare their young to face the challenges of the world, and so they organized a school. They adopted a curriculum of running, climbing, swimming and flying. And to make sure all animals were competent in all of the important skills, all the animal children had to take all of the subjects.

Duck was an excellent swimmer, better in fact than his instructor, and made passing grades in flying, but he was very poor in running. Because he was slow in running, he had to stay after school and also spend less time swimming, in order to spend more time practicing his running. This was continued until his webbed feet were badly worn and he was only average in swimming. But, average was acceptable in the new animal school, so nobody worried about that except the Duck.

Rabbit started at the top of her class in running, but later she had a nervous breakdown because of so much make-up work in swimming.

Squirrel was excellent in climbing until he developed frustration in flying class, where his teacher made him start from down on the ground instead of from up in the treetops. His feelings of frustration spilled over into all his other classes and he ended up with a C in climbing and a D in running.

The newest student in the school was a strange animal called the Snakehead fish. He was very different from the other animals and often felt out of place.

At first he struggled and was behind in almost every subject. But by the end of the year the Snakehead fish, which could swim well and climb trees and also walk on land, was the number one student in the entire school and was voted valedictorian of his class.

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Gifted—Not Broken

Overcoming Dyslexia, ADD and Other Learning Challenges

The paradigm that children with learning challenges are gifted, not broken, honors the child and the gifts that he brings to the world. It opens the door to a cooperative relationship between student and teacher. Rather than leaving us distracted by the limitations of the child, the paradigm of gifted—not broken allows us to focus on the strengths of the child, his natural abilities and his real purpose which is to learn and grow. – Gerald Hughes

Gerald Hughes spent most of his scholastic life struggling with the effects of Dyslexia and ADD. While he excelled in both Math and science, his reading, writing and other studies suffered terribly due to his ongoing struggle with written and verbal information. By his Junior year, he had virtually given up on academics.

A decade passed before Gerald decided to tackle college. Gerald majored in both communications and computer science. Gerald created his first coaching program in 1994. He later studied Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) under Dr. Tad James and in 2006 Gerald was certified as an NLP Master Practitioner.



In 2006, Gerald founded the Neuro-Linguistic Learning Center in El Dorado Hills, California. Since then, Gerald has been assisting both children and adults in overcoming a variety of learning challenges.

Gerald has lived in El Dorado County for the past 12 years. He is father to six children, several of whom have had their own struggles with learning. He is a frequent speaker and lecturer on overcoming the effects of Dyslexia and ADD.

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