

News & Announcements

Our 500th Student!

We've marked a significant milestone in supporting Victoria students: since 2002, STR has been of assistance to over 500 students (more than 200 students since October 2006). It's such a pleasure to be of real support to our community!

The 500th student has received a free registration and discounted tuition for as long as she continues with tutoring.

Thank you for continuing to support this local, values-based business.

STR in the Community

Smart Tutor Referrals spoke with the peer tutors at Claremont Secondary on October 22nd and the peer tutors at Mt. Douglas Secondary on October 24th, 2008.

Smart Tutor Referrals offers talks and workshops for peer tutors, learning assistance teachers, teachers and students.

30 - 45 minute talks for peer tutors are offered free of charge as a community service.

Earn a Discount

Complete our online survey and receive a discount toward your tuition or earn money toward a discount for tutoring for someone at your school.

Visit our website to learn more about the survey:

www.SmartTutorReferrals.com

Dyslexia and the Right-Brained Learner

This month's edition of "The Smart Connection" is excerpted, with permission, from Janice Turner's book, Dyslexia, or Being Right Brained. Janice Turner is an author in Victoria, BC. After 15 years of teaching, researching and developing learning techniques, she co-authored this book with Karen Hope. Janice is also the author of Dyslexia: Spelling, The Study of English Literature, and The Study of English Language.

(Disclaimer: Although this excerpt is being re-printed here and is a very informative perspective on dyslexia, it does not entirely represent the views of Smart Tutor Referrals in relation to dyslexia.)

When working with dyslexia, we are not dealing with a learning disability nor a neurological dysfunction. We are working with a right-brained dominance that provides a different view or approach to seeing and understanding the world that results in a different set of learning aptitudes and approaches to reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic and mathematics.

The left brain thinks in letters and numbers. It can understand the parts of a whole image such as letters in a word or numbers in a date as well as recognize them separately from the whole. It can sequence the parts and understand the abstract words, ideas or concepts that make up the whole image. **As a result the left brain is able to work out ideas and problems deductively; that is, it begins with an open-ended question and moves forward in a logical step-by-step order to arrive at a conclusion.**

The right brain cannot easily distinguish the letters or numbers which make up the parts of the whole image or concept because it thinks in whole concrete images and concepts that it can visualize. If the parts are presented separately from the whole, it does not even understand what these symbols represent.

In comparing the two thinking processes of the brain, the left brain thinks in open-ended logical formats which lead step-by-step to a conclusion or fact (deductive reasoning), **the right brain thinks inductively which**

means it begins with the conclusion or stated fact.

Once it grasps the whole concept in a visualized form such as a conclusion or fact (not an open question) the right brain thinks about it by analyzing all aspects of the separate parts of the conclusion. In a sense, the right brain starts at the end with a fact or a conclusion and works "backwards" to understand each aspect that makes up that fact or conclusion. Understanding one part quickly leads to understanding the next.

Everything must be presented to the right brain in whole, concrete images.

If the right brain is unable to distinguish the letters in a word, it may not understand the meaning of the word, especially if the word is abstract. The process of changing the idea into a concrete image that the brain recognizes has not been completed. There are many words in the English language that are abstract and cannot be changed into the concrete. They are learned and accepted by years of experience and application that build acceptance, if not total understanding.

Examples: immediately, sometime, however, usually, often. The meaning of each of these words is further complicated because they all refer to the very abstract idea of "time" which in itself is difficult for the right brain to comprehend.

The same holds true for reading sentences or paragraphs. **Unable to form concrete images of what the abstract words describe, the right brain cannot turn them into concrete images it understands. Therefore, it cannot process the information the words represent in a logical, step-by-step manner to reach a conclusion.**

Example: if a right-brained person is given a question that says "Describe a scene with an animal in action," the word "describe" cannot be changed into an image, therefore,

About Us

Our Mission Is:

- ▶ To provide top quality, flexible learning support and service to students and parents through:

*In-home private tutoring
matched specifically to
each student's needs.*

*Stimulating workshops
building skills in a practical
and creative way.*

- ▶ To enhance students' skills and increase learning confidence through one-on-one support that is truly individualized, recognizing each student's unique abilities.
- ▶ To improve the quality of life, in individuals and communities through education.

Our tutors are certified teachers and professionals. They are carefully screened and chosen specially to match the needs and learning styles of each student.

We support families in education.

For more information and resources, visit us on-line at:

www.SmartTutorReferrals.com

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there is no understanding of what the student is expected to give in the answer. In fact, every word in the question is abstract. To be understood, the question must be stated as follows: "A large, black bear walked into our camp. **Using this as your topic sentence, tell us what you see happening next and explaining why you feel these things happened.**"

There are several key words in this topic sentence now that aid the student. The image of the bear is clear. The setting is given and the directions are understandable. Most important are the words "tell us" and "see" and "feel". Each of these words refer to one of the three learning senses: auditory, visual and kinesthetic and require their input. Using these senses, the right brain is able to understand what it must learn or discuss.

Teaching the Dyslexic

Teaching the dyslexic is accomplished only if the teacher can reduce the fear of words and learning by creating a quiet, happy situation without stress and impossible expectations, using teaching methods that can be understood by the student.

The Five Steps to Learning as set out below are the keys to teaching the right brain. They provide the route to understanding and processing new information. Whenever you feel you have not got an idea across to your students, say to yourself, "Did I give them all the instructions they need?" Chances are you omitted one or more of the following steps:

The Five Steps to Learning

1. WHY? Why must I learn this? (Purpose) The brain must first know WHY it should accept an assignment or do a lesson.
2. WHAT? What do you expect to find in my answer(s)? The brain must be trained to take notes, choose appropriate materials, focus, organize and develop answers that present ideas in a logical sequence on the question or topic to be discussed.

3. HOW? How do I present my answer? Orally or written? Single words, sentences, paragraphs or essays? How do I write each of these forms? The skills required are the basic rules of grammar, sentence structure, paragraph and essay formats. The brain must be shown full procedural systems of these language forms for organizing the ideas and answers either on paper or for oral presentation.

4. WHEN? When do I start, finish and hand in the assignment? The brain must be instructed as to when to start on the assignment in class or at home, and when it must be finished for correcting or handing in for marking. Without these instructions it does not understand the time limits involved or panics because it doesn't know them.

5. OUTCOME? What have I learned? How will I use this information in future? The brain must understand the whole picture, its outcome and future applications in lessons or assignments if it is to do the work.

In view of the right-brained student's learning styles, these five steps set out the criteria that must be provided for them each time you teach them a new lesson, analyze new information, give out an assignment or expect them to complete the work to meet your expectations.

Foremost is recognizing that the learning problems arise from the right brain processing everything in wholes: whole pictures, whole images, whole lessons, whole ideas, whole concepts, whole explanations and instructions, whole assignments and projects. Every time your right-brain students are having difficulty understanding a lesson or instructions, stop and think about your presentation: **Have you given the students the full image or explanation of the lesson, assignment or test you are teaching them?**

"Learning is not attained by chance, it must be sought for with ardor and attended to with diligence."

Abigail Adams (1744 - 1818)