

Touch for Health International Conference, July 8-13, 1986
Abstract of Research Paper

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ABSTRACT

"Re-Discovering Learning": The New E-K Consultant's Manual and Workshop

The new E-K Consultant's Manual, written especially for those working with people of any age who have difficulty with academics, is being written and will soon be available at Advanced E-K "Re-Discovering Learning" Workshops planned for the fall of 1986. Academic areas covered in the Manual include reading, writing, spelling, speaking, listening, math, and study skills. Contents of the Manual include goals, pre- and post-tests, and high energy materials with directions for skill-building mini sessions to follow an E-K I or E-K II balance. Slides and a description of the Pilot Project, using the new Manual with an eight year old boy who has schooling difficulties, indicate the many rich possibilities for the use of this book. Samples of one of the pre-tests and some of the high energy materials from the Manual's reading unit will give the participant a taste of what will be taught in the three-day "Re-Discovering Learning" workshop.

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Outline of Research Paper

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"Re-Discovering Learning": The New E-K Consultant's Manual and Workshop

I. Introduction

A. Self introduction

1. Educational background and experience: how and why I got into E-K
2. Why we must avoid using the negative medical terms "dyslexia" and "learning disability"

B. What I'm going to speak about today

II. The New Manual: "Re-Discovering Learning: The E-K Consultant's Manual"

A. Purposes for the manual

1. To be used only by E-K Consultants who have attended the Workshop which goes along with the manual
2. For those E-K Consultants who plan to work with people of all ages who want to improve their functioning in reading, spelling, writing, speaking, listening, math, and study skills
3. To provide a way for E-K Consultants to do a balancing and a skill-building session at the same time

B. Uses of the manual

1. Complete E-K balance for one of the goals
2. E-K I or E-K II mini-balance for a goal, plus short skill-building session
3. Combining 2. above with oversight of another person working with the client in skill-building sessions, using the Brain Gym plus the high energy material suggested in the manual

C. Contents

1. Goals for the E-K Balance
2. Muscle testing: the full E-K balance, the E-K I or II balance
3. Pre- and post-tests
 - 1) Samples of a few pages (handouts) and how they can be used
4. Materials and directions for skill-building mini-sessions
 - 1) Samples of a few pages (handouts) and how they can be used

III. A Pilot Project for the Manual

A. Description of the project

1. Piloting the manual
2. Using the E-K Balance and mini skill-building session with BJ, a young 8-year old boy who has difficulty in reading, writing, and spelling

B. Case study of BJ, his educational ups and downs

C. Slides of the project and overheads of BJ's work

V. Conclusion: Possibilities for this Work and Promise for the Future

A. Educational possibilities

B. Workshops

C. Promise for the future

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"Re-Discovering Learning": The New E-K Consultant's Manual and Workshop

I wonder how many of us there are who have come into E-K through the education door. As for me, I have taught in elementary and secondary schools, as well as at the college and university level. The areas of my expertise are Elementary Education, Psychology, Special Education, and especially Reading/language Arts. However, my 20 years of teaching and studying in traditional academic settings did not answer the questions I have always had about human beings and learning. Why is it, I have often wondered, that children can be so bright and learn so poorly? From everything I could read and observe, it seemed that this was due to poor educational practices in providing an excellent learning environment for these children. And so I taught in the classroom for years to provide just such an excellent learning environment for my students. And then I taught for some more years to teach teachers how to provide excellent learning environments for their students. However, it wasn't enough. Things change very slowly in the huge monolith that is the school system.

Probably the straw that broke the camel's back and caused me to leave the traditional educational system was the rampant practice of labeling children "learning disabled" and "dyslexic". It seemed grossly unfair to me that that the schools should provide poor learning environments for some children and then turn around and blame these same children for not learning and call them disabled. In the popular mind and press, "learning disabled" and "dyslexic" people transpose letters and numbers, and have "something the matter" with their brains. I actually heard a teacher explain to her "LD" labeled children that there were some connections in their brains that weren't working. She was an excellent teacher. I was shocked. Did she have any idea what she was doing to these young people? I found out later what some of them were thinking about it. One boy confided in me that his brain didn't work right; several others told me that they were teased and called "retarded" (Lenk 1982). Under these and similar circumstances across the country, it seems reasonable to assume that youngsters who have been labeled "learning disabled and "dyslexic" could easily believe that there is something the matter with their brains, something permanently wrong.

There are a number of educator/researchers who join me in deploring this labeling. They point out that "dyslexia" is a term which means only "not being able to read" and that other meanings have been stuck to it over time. The added meanings only cloud the issue and are not helpful in figuring out how to teach such children and adults (Freston 1968, Botel 1969). It is the same with "learning disability", a term which was redefined by the federal government for funding purposes to include difficulty in all school subjects, not just reading. However, labeling children in this way has masked other causes for schooling difficulties, such as poverty, poor nutrition, lack of sleep, food additives, and the

tendency of the school system to sort children into categories which do not necessarily fit either their way of learning or their culture (Coles 1978, McDermott 1982).

We in the field of E-K and Touch for Health must be especially sensitive and aware of the hazards of labeling people. "Disability" and "dyslexia" are both medical terms. Since "dis" or "dys" means "not" in Latin, obviously these terms are negative as well. I propose we start using the terms "learning differences" or "learning difficulties" and stop using the negative medical terms "learning disability" and "dyslexia".

Thank goodness I discovered E-K! Actually it found me, when my daughter-in-law, Patti Steurer-Lenk, taught an E-K Basic I class at my home. This home has now been transformed into the Center for Educational Integration, where my partner and I teach E-K and Touch for Health classes and sponsor advanced E-K workshops! Now it has become clear to me that the way we are going is to help people "switch on" so they can learn in all kinds of environments. It has just struck me that as we balance teachers and teach them how to use the Brain Gym (Dennison & Dennison 1986) in their classrooms, they themselves will think in more integrated ways and so be able to provide more conducive classroom settings for their students to learn in.

The rest of my talk today will focus on the new E-K Consultant's Manual: "Re-Discovering Learning", the Pilot Project using the new manual, the workshop which will introduce it to all of you who are already E-K Consultants, plus some concluding thoughts about the promise of this E-K work for the future of education and humankind. And for those of you who have yet to enter the exciting world of E-K Consultants, I invite you to "listen up" and see what is in store for you!

Do you have a client---or maybe you have a few---who wants to improve some academic skill such as reading, spelling, writing, speaking, listening, math, or study skills? The new E-K Consultants' Manual, "Re-Discovering Learning", will provide guidelines, materials, and directions for you to help these clients in very specific ways. How many children have you balanced and then said to yourself, "Oh, if there were only somebody to teach this child properly, now that she is so ready to learn!" This manual is designed especially to enable you to do an E-K balance and a mini skill-building session at the same time. In our 3-day workshop you will learn how to use it and become familiar with materials for your skill-building sessions.

There are several options you have for an E-K private session. Through the use of the muscle test, the client will choose whether for this particular goal---it may be "To spell better"---he will have a full E-K balance, or an E-K I or II balance and a mini skill-building session. You might also want to do a few balances with skill-building sessions and add to it oversight of another person (e.g. parent, teacher) teaching the young person using the Brain Gym plus some high energy materials suggested in the manual. There will surely be many more ways to use this book as it gets out into your creative hands and minds.

The contents of the manual include goals for each section, such as this

goal for spelling---"To make words work for me"---and this one for reading---"To make the story my own as I read." Then there are pre- and post-tests. This particular Cloze Test to be used as one of the reading pre- and post-tests, is one I have developed especially for this manual. It draws on a person's total knowledge of written language. She must draw on everything she knows about language and use all the clues from the rest of the passage to fill in the blanks in the sentences. The post-test is another selection from the same story. These stories are from graded readers so the E-K Consultant can tell which pre-test to use by following the explicit directions accompanying the pre-test. In the manual there are also high energy materials for the skill-building sessions. The samples you have in your hands have been chosen particularly for improving reading with simultaneous brain processing. This means that both right and left hemispheres are functioning at the same time. As you can see, the directions are clearly written on the side of the page. You won't be able to resist playing these games with your young client! At the end of the manual there is a source list so that you can order other good materials for skill-building sessions.

I thought it would be a good idea to do a pilot project for the new E-K Consultants' manual to check out any 'bugs' in the system. Since I had been working with a young 8 year old boy, BJ, I asked him and his parents if they would do some research with me. They were delighted, and so we began. We agreed that BJ and his mother would come over once a month for a balancing for each one of the goals, and each time we would do a mini skill-building session. BJ would help by evaluating each session ("What went well, and what would you have liked more of and less of?"), giving instant feedback and thus reshaping the next session.

BJ has had reading difficulty since first grade in W.School, a private school where his father teaches and his mother taught up until this year. He has had a series of tutors until he began to get stomach aches and his parents decided it wasn't helping his reading anyway. When I first balanced him in August of 1985, he was instructional at the first grade level, but read without expression and without stopping for punctuation. As September turned into October in his third grade classroom, BJ encountered great difficulty with spelling, and was highly frustrated in Social Studies class, not being able to read the textbook at all. Temper tantrums and an episode of running away from home scared his parents, and his mother called me up frantically to see if I could do another balancing. BJ himself, although originally interested and cooperative, seemed to distrust the muscle testing process and refused to do any of the brain gym exercises. He appeared to want to ignore his difficulties, and be just "one of the gang". In sports he was a star, having won some soccer trophies already at the tender age of 7. His best friend was not only a star in sports, like BJ, but also at the top of his grade academically. BJ could not understand why he was having trouble, and compared himself continually to his best friend.

BJ actually progressed a year and a half in his reading level after the two balancings that I did with him, so that by April 1986 he was instructional at the 2-2 level. He was by this time only a year below grade level in his reading. This is considered excellent progress in the field of Reading. Unfortunately, however, the average child in his third grade was reading at about the 5th grade level! At a school conference in April

1986, Master A, BJ's teacher, informed BJ's parents that he probably would have to repeat 3rd grade. The teacher also suggested that BJ might go home and be tutored by his mother for a half hour every day during silent reading period. It looked like BJ was so embarrassed by what he couldn't read that he was beginning to be a behaviour problem in the classroom during silent reading time. This was an option that I had suggested at the beginning of the year, since BJ lives right next to the school. So now the perfect set-up was at last at hand.....the family ready to work with me on an ongoing basis, BJ open to helping me out with the research, and 20 minutes every day with his mother to do some high energy learning.

As of this writing, the Pilot Project is going very well. BJ has proven himself to be an excellent and enthusiastic researcher, and is now doing his brain gym in school, for he was reprimanded by Master A for doing Lazy 8's before writing---he thought BJ was scribbling! BJ said he would explain to his teacher why he was doing it. His mother is working with him every day, and they are both enjoying this very much, partly due to the high energy material that they are working with. But the best part of the Project is that, because the learning seems to be so much easier after the balance, BJ has dared to be encouraged at his own progress, even though he still compares himself to his friends. This encouragement in turn keeps him at his brain gym, which in turn makes him better at his learning. His parents are taking heart again, and though the progress might not be as fast as BJ would like, it is steady.

The educational possibilities of this work are many. According to BJ's parents, E-K so far is the only thing that has really worked with BJ, and they are pleased with his progress. And so, to parents with children who, like BJ, have some schooling difficulty, we can offer this program with the assumption that immediately after a balancing, when everything is working simultaneously, learning will be faster and more efficient. Other possibilities are that children will tell their teachers about E-K so that more educators will learn about it and use it in their classrooms. But the most important possibility is that young people will enjoy the balancing, the high energy materials, doing the brain gyms. and be encouraged by their own progress.

Gail and Paul Dennison and I offer this Manual and Workshop, knowing that you will use it, and enjoy it, as will the people you work with. The possibilities are limitless, only bounded by our imaginations. It is good work, important work, inspirational work, and world-changing work that we are doing. What promise for the future of our planet---people re-discovering their own curiosity, ability, creativity, excitement and joy in learning.

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