

The Arrowsmith Program for Learning Difficulties
Everything You Wanted to Know – and More
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Me? Have problems falling asleep?!

As a busy mother, using all her physical and emotional stamina to run a household filled with kids, I'd never have believed that I'd ever experience anything other than blissful sleep after my head touched the pillow at night; that I'd ever know what it meant to toss and turn, to hear the lonely tick-tock of the clock nestled on my night table as it counts the seemingly endless minutes until daybreak. Then, Shimmy began grade school...and the nightmare began – literally. Although my physical self yearned for the deep, relaxing slumber I had not too long ago taken for granted, my mental state was in high active gear, barring that ever-so sought-after relaxing and rejuvenating nighttime unconsciousness. Now, images of Shimmy in school danced wickedly around my head without letup. In my mind, I pictured Shimmy's uncomprehending, painfully helpless look as the exasperated teacher tried to explain simple concepts to him. I observed his quick glance of embarrassment at the other children as he struggled for an answer that seemed to be totally beyond his reach. I perceived his already low self-esteem deflate like a winding punctured balloon. And I worried.

Alone in the darkness, I worried as only a distraught mother could. I worried about the skills used as building blocks for further learning that Shimmy was not acquiring. I worried about the sudden display of misconduct the principal had related about Shimmy to me. And I worried about all the frightening scenarios and terrifying 'what ifs' the future of a learning disabled son, like my Shimmy, could bring...

For the parent of a learning disabled child grappling for a lifeline, The Arrowsmith Learning Program offers a world of solutions. Based on Barbara Arrowsmith Young's extensive exploration into the scientific notion of the 'plastic brain', a premise that the brain has an intrinsic ability to restructure and correct difficulties in the learning process it once confronted, learning disabled individuals CAN begin to do what previously had seemed entirely elusive to them: process information, calculate...and, yes, actually LEARN!

The Arrowsmith Program:
Common questions, sensible answers

Who is Barbara Arrowsmith Young and did she have any background association with the learning disabled prior to her discovery?

Astoundingly, Barbara Arrowsmith Young represents more than a random unaffiliated person of intelligence or educator who sought to remedy a seemingly impossible situation. As a learning disabled young adult, herself, who had grown up in the 1970s in Canada, she knew first-hand about the enormous challenges, label stereotyping, and

barricades to education those like her faced. Wrestling with the seriousness of her own personal auditory processing difficulties, she stubbornly set her mind to transform a negative past learning experience that had impeded her own previous success in internalizing facts for all-too long. Working feverishly with the innovative theory that the brain does, in fact, have an in-born ability to adjust its own deficiencies, she developed a phenomenal breakthrough – a series of cognitive exercises that would *correct* the problem lurking behind learning disabilities and unleash the wonderful ability to learn! Encouraged by her own personal emancipation from the cumbersome impacting ramifications of learning disabilities, over the past three decades, she has further expanded and developed her program, amalgamating solutions for many of the most common disorders found within students.

In a nutshell, what is the difference between this program and others bent on assisting those with learning disabilities?

While other remedial programs attempt to teach students with learning deficiencies by providing support systems that *compensate* for a weakness, much like a crutch, the Arrowsmith Program relies on its unique exercises to actually *transform* the brain's abilities. By first addressing a child's weakness and then placing him or her on an individualized program of cognitive exercises, it aims to fortify the brain's ability to learn.

Can anyone with these common learning disabilities benefit from the Arrowsmith Program?

Those students that fall within the range of average or above average intelligence and participate in Arrowsmith's full spectrum of individualized specific cognitive exercises can produce authentic results.

How long must a child participate in these exercises before being successfully integrated in the general mainstream class?

The program's exercises are designed to fit within a three to four year program, depending on the student. A child who has undergone the full set of sessions can participate in a regular curriculum with no further need for program accommodation.

Where has the Arrowsmith Program been integrated?

Initially having been implemented in the public school system of Toronto, Canada, through government funding, its over a decade-worth of chartered success has prompted a widespread popularity. It continues to grow throughout the United States, including among the yeshiva world.

What are the professionals saying about the Arrowsmith Program?

Not surprisingly, some of the most respected in this field of education are lauding Barbara Young Arrowsmith's documented achievements. In fact, the New York Times best-selling book about the theory that Arrowsmith Young utilized to reach her milestones, Norman Dodge's *The Brain That Changes Itself*, depicts the program as the leading expert in learning disabilities and neuroplastic work. Boldly underscoring that recognition is the book's flattering reviews written by the *Scientific American Mind* and the American Academy of Neurology.

Notwithstanding all this, in a 2007 Toronto Catholic District School Board report, noted researchers observed the progress of students who had undergone ten years of the program's core curriculum. What they discovered was concurrent with the consistent fanfare of excellence that Arrowsmith was receiving: rates of learning in regard to specific tasks, such as word recognition, arithmetic, reading comprehension, and reading speed actually increased by one-and-one-half to triple the rates of learning prior to the program's inception.

"The program is truly remarkable," writes 25-year Toronto Catholic District veteran school teacher, Sheila Brown Vitullo who has been an Arrowsmith instructor at St. Theresa Shrine Catholic School in the Scarborough area suburb for the past nine years. "It's giving some traditionally disadvantaged children much brighter futures. They are able to reach their potential and progress alongside their peers in the regular stream."

The Arrowsmith's recent feature presentation on a November 2009 CNN television show, additionally marks the celebration of its remarkable agenda and feats as it continues to impress both laymen and a distinguished audience of academics.

What yeshivos and Jewish girls' schools currently have the Arrowsmith program within their curriculum?

The general euphoria surrounding the Arrowsmith Learning Program has not escaped the yeshiva system. To date, there are six Jewish schools, nationwide, that have incorporated it into their educational structure, including Maimonides Academy of Los Angeles, Toras Emes Academy of Miami, the Jewish Educational Center in Elizabeth, NJ, Yeshiva Degel HaTorah of Spring Valley, as well as the Brooklyn based Beth Jacob of Boro Park and Yeshiva Tiferes Yisroel - where parents were actually *reimbursed* by the New York City Board of Education for their expenditures towards the Arrowsmith Program.

The current status quo is temporary, however. As the incredible success stories in regard to the Arrowsmith Program continue to circulate, its reputation increases and accelerates, stimulating parents in Jewish communities where it has not yet been implemented to begin the process of initiating the curriculum within their very own education systems, in Lakewood, NJ, for example .

All of this information is very encouraging. What are the students, themselves, saying about the program, indicating the crux of the matter?

Read and see for yourself!

“...I saw improvements in many things. First I saw in math. I use to get 60’s on my math test, but now I get 100’s and 90’s. I also saw improvements by Chumash. First I don’t use the English test as much as I used to. I also get better marks. I also take the test in less time than I used to...”

“...One time, my science teacher was talking really fast and I needed to know a definition. My teacher only said it once and moved on and I remembered what she said!...”

“...There were many improvements this year and these are what they are. The first one was that I am a much faster typer. It used to take me about 20 seconds to find one letter. Now it takes me 1 second. I am also a faster reader. It takes me about 15 seconds to read an average paragraph. I also feel that my handwriting is much nicer and faster. I also understand Math problems and problem solving much easier. There are many more improvements but I can’t list them all...”

“...I’ve seen improvements in division. It is much easier for me because I am able to do it faster. I’ve also seen improvements in spelling. I can remember how to spell the words..”.

“...Arrowsmith has helped me with clock. I know how to read a clock much better and I understand it much better. I now remember things around me. I also write faster and neater and get better at writing. Arrowsmith has also helped me with my street smarts and with Hebrew sometimes...”

“...Arrowsmith gave me improvement in math because I do math problems a little quicker. I see improvement in reading comprehension. When I read a book and when I do reading questions in class. I see improvement in notes because I could write much better and quicker in it...”

“...Now, when my mother tells me to get something from a store, she doesn’t need to repeat the items a second time to me. Or, let’s say, Now that doesn’t happen to me anymore!...”

“...I have seen improvement in a few areas. One of the things I see improvement is math. I feel I am able to understand right away. Another thing where I see improvement is in hand writing. I am writing much neater. The last area where I see improvement is remembering things and hearing things the first time. For example, if my mother tells me to do a few things or go shopping and say things I should get, I remember! There are two areas where I would like to see more improvements – one is my spelling. I hope you have something to improve that. The other thing is the Main Ideas literature. My teacher

usually gives us stories to read and questions to answer or an essay. I have a hard time doing this..."

The Arrowsmith Program: A Parent's Dream

"...I see an improvement in Akiva's spelling and reading. He looked at the dials on the oven a few days ago (as if seeing them for the first time) and read each one and asked how they worked! He also wrote a short composition in English class which was comprehensible enough for the teacher to read and grade with a check plus!..."

Is my child achieving? Is *she* self-content and happy? What will *his* future hold for him?

With the Arrowsmith Program, a learning disabled child *can* attain the wonderful unique potential imbued within by the Creator's individual design.

In all honesty, is there any other concept in the entire world that can induce a parent's good night sleep better than that?