

SPINS

Students and Parents Information Network Support

SPINS Newzine • Fall 2006 • Volume 2 Issue 3

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It's that time of year – the trees are engaged in a spectacular display, nature's way of signaling a time of transition. Fall is also a time of transition for our children. They are settling in to school and adjusting to new teachers and different expectations. Some have made the transition to new schools or colleges or are just beginning kindergarten or first grade.

Transitions may be particularly difficult for students with Attention Deficit Disorder because of executive processing deficits, poor organization, and time management skills, and the very nature of ADD itself.

Whether your child is off to college, high school, middle school, elementary, or kindergarten, we hope you will find this issue's articles informative and interesting.

MUSIC FOR YOUR EARS? NO... MUSIC FOR YOUR BRAIN!

By Judith E. Bessette, EdD

Whether age 8 or age 88...dealing with ADHD or working on a PhD...it appears that virtually everyone has something to learn from an auditory stimulation program called The Listening Program or TLP.

Recently, I learned about TLP from two practitioners who recommend this program regularly to help both children and adults with ADHD, ADD, PTSD, anxiety, depression and stress reduction – even autism. Advanced Brain Technologies, ABT, the company that released the program in 1999, describes its uses in less clinical terms, saying you can move beyond barriers and maximize your potential with improvements in:

- Auditory processing and Attention,
- Communication and Sensory Integration,
- Concentration and Learning and
- Social Skills and Self Esteem.

TLP is designed to be used at home and uses specially-treated classical music and nature sounds to improve auditory processing. Over 2,000 authorized providers make the system available internationally for less than \$600. The fee includes the music on CDs, a 112 page manual and both e-mail and phone support from the provider.

So, where did this program come from and why does it work? To address these questions, think about what we now know about the brain. During the last 20 years, scientists have learned more about the brain than the sum of all that was previously known about the brain. We now think of the brain as a dynamic organ and know that appropriate stimuli can lead to the development of both new neural pathways and increased capacity. We also know that the brain is not fully developed in our young until twenty-something.

TLP embraces the notion that the senses feed the brain – and that by employing specialized sound, the auditory system can be enhanced or even re-trained. In other words, the program uses the brain-ear connection to correct auditory distortion or improve clarity. The music in the program is highly structured and produces sound waves in organized patterns. This psycho-acoustically modified music stimulates or exercises the brain, improving a wide range of functions.

While it may seem obvious that this program can help children and adults with auditory processing problems, it may be less obvious that auditory distortion can also affect the vestibular system (which allows us to stand upright, maintain balance and move through space) and the visual system, leading to problems with sensory integration. Correcting an auditory problem may lead to improved writing skills, enhanced reading skills, better motor function and even a superior tennis game!

The research behind TLP comes from the work of the French-born otolaryngologist Alfred Tomatis, MD whose 50 + years of clinical experience and anecdotal evidence show that sound stimulations can provide valuable remediation and developmental training for people of all ages. ABT has conducted university research, school pilot studies and case reports that consistently demonstrate 2 – 3 year gains for many children on standardized tests.

As the body of knowledge about the brain continues to grow, the results support the efficacy of The Listening Program. New studies from the University of Wisconsin on brain plasticity, the capacity of the brain to develop and change, have examined the effects of both medication and meditation. Studying Tibetan Buddhist monks, researchers have been able to demonstrate how meditation alters brain function.

Using TLP is easy. It requires a high quality CD player and headphones as well as a comfortable place for the listener to sit and relax. The core program, the Classic Kit, is used 5 days a week for 15 – 30 minutes a day over the course of eight to ten weeks. The full

cycle is then repeated to maximize its benefit. Many providers recommend revisiting the cycle on an annual basis. Additional CDs are available for special needs. Both clinicians who recommend the program and providers who sell the program point out that TLP is even more effective when completed in concert with other modalities such as psychotherapy, speech or occupational therapy.

And the down side? Well, I'm not



sure that I found one. If it does nothing else, the listener will have had some quiet time and exposure to some great music. And the potential upside seems worth the time and investment involved.

This article recently appeared in both the print edition and the on-line version of Woodbury Reports, an information resource that helps parents find the right school or program when their child is experiencing significant behavioral or emotional problems. Judith is an educational consultant based in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and is also a research affiliate of Woodbury Reports, Inc. She works with families all over the country who are dealing with troubled teens. You can reach her at judib@wi.rr.com or at 414-581-9146. For more information on Woodbury Reports, see www.strugglingteens.com.

You can get information on the web about ABT, including a list of providers. Melissa East, www.HoneybeeListening.com is a certified provider who was helpful in writing this article.