

A Perspective of FIE in the Homeschool Tutorial Community
by Nora Davis

As an educator for many years, I was intrigued to learn about the Feuerstein Instrumental Enrichment program. After training as an FIE teacher, I introduced the program to homeschool groups in our area in Nashville, Tennessee. Our homeschool community was enthusiastic to learn about the mediation techniques and the idea of having FIE classes at the tutorial centers. Parents of children with special needs were particularly eager to hear more about it. We began FIE classes in the fall of 2008.

In the last two years, we have taught 9 classes consisting of elementary and high school students. Class size ranged from 4 to 12 students. The following information recounts some of the experiences with those FIE students.

We began, of course, with Organization of Dots. The elementary class consisted of 9 children, ages 9 to 11. The class was enthusiastic about the Dot pages from the first day. The students were eager to show their knowledge of the cognitive functions as we focused on certain ones each week. Overall, the confidence level in the students increased dramatically by the end of the first year. As an aside, I also teach science at the tutorial and had two of the FIE students in my class. One of the students who had FIE the previous year maintained the best grades in the Life Science class.

Seven high school FIE classes were taught at 2 different tutorial centers. One of the larger classes consisted of 10 students with no known learning disabilities and 2 students with severe dyslexia. This class gained mastery over many of their deficiencies, including an increase in math grades, reading and writing (especially the dyslexic students) and overall confidence. The class was enthusiastic and eager to experience each new instrument. Many of these students also took the next level of FIE the next year and have continued to improve.

In the fall of 2008, after several weeks of FIE mediation and discussion of the cognitive functions, I asked the high school students to list what they thought their own deficiencies were. The students were surprisingly frank about this. We had discussed the value of evaluating ourselves honestly in order to strengthen weak areas. The following is a partial list of what the teenagers listed:

Stubbornness Forgetting
Reading words in the wrong order Fear of everything
Not following directions Fear of being graded
Short attention span Skipping important steps
Trouble focusing Depression
Impatient
Fear of taking the first step
Saying or doing something before thinking
Fear of making mistakes
Neglecting important decisions

Working too fast
Laziness
Problems with spelling
Problems with math and chemistry
Loss of motivation
Listening problems
Arguing
Hot-tempered
Won't keep my mouth shut
Retaliation
Nosy
Arrogant
Procrastinating

Remember, this is what they listed about themselves.

Later in the school year, after months of FIE instruction, I asked the same students to list 5 areas where they felt the FIE program had helped them. The following is a summary of their actual responses:

To plan before I act
To use things that have worked before
To get it right the first time
To acknowledge my flaws but not concentrate on them
To not make something harder than it really is
Not panicking as much
To plan ahead and be better organized
Expanded my vocabulary and helped my spelling
Helped me to be more patient
Helped me to understand what I am capable of
To use self-talk
Helped me to be able to see things in a different perspective
To use appropriate and correct language
To have a clear understanding of the task at hand and what I need to accomplish
To control impulsivity

The students have experienced significant improvement, not only academically, but in the areas that matter most to all of us: in family, social and spiritual interactions.