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My name is Rebecca Lepak and I am a certified speech and language pathologist. I am owner and director of a speech and language company called Lepak & Associates P.C. We have been in business for 13 years. I have been involved with IE for the past five years. I have completed all the basic and standard instruments. My team has been certified in 10 or more of the instruments. We work with children, adolescents, and adults with developmental disorders including: Autism, Aspergers, Down Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, Expressive and Receptive Language delays, Articulation Disorders, Language Based Reading Delays, Language Based Writing Delays, etc.

As a very involved clinician for 17 years, I have searched for programs that enrich my student's lives. Our team has been certified in many programs. Dr. Feuerstein's Instrumental Enrichment (FIE) and the process of mediated learning have overhauled our clinic in a dynamic way. We utilize mediation throughout our therapy. We have found it a vital tool not only for teaching, but also in our parenting. Mediation is a process whereby the students are challenged through systematic questioning to discover and realize their patterns of learning. They are then challenged to apply this new learning system to their everyday life through the process of transcendence.

When initially starting our journey with FIE, we noticed that our students were becoming less prompt dependent. They were relying on their own skills rather than looking at us for verbal clues, gestures, or placement clues. We have struggled as professionals when trying to teach children, adolescents, and young adults to be learners in their everyday environments. The struggle we often face is not in the teaching of the concepts themselves, but in the generalization and usability of the information being taught. It often becomes teaching concepts and generalizing these concepts vs. mediating the students thinking to stimulate and guide their current and future thinking. FIE has enriched the learning experiences of the individuals we work with.

Over the years some of the feedback we have received from our cliental are: "Just a minute, let me think about that"; "I get it now! I never understood how to compare things before"; "OH, I missed something relevant"; "If I find four right angles, then I usually find the square"; "I never use to think about what I was saying"; "I know what you mean by disequilibrium!", and "I can figure it out myself". For younger more impaired non-verbal students we are teaching them to "self-correct", know when to get their own reinforcers vs. being given it by the clinician, and really truly understand and utilize a "yes/no" response system. It may seem subtle, but these changes are allowing the individuals we treat to gain systematic practice and become self motivated learners.

Disequilibrium is one of our favorite techniques utilized in the FIE programs. It allows a student to struggle to find the satisfaction of achieving. Building intrinsic motivation is always tricky, yet very powerful. This program teaches it with consistent mediated practice. So many times as clinicians we rush in to "save the day" or to "teach", especially when we see our student struggling. It is vital for all learners to not only experience disequilibrium, but to be mediated at a distant so that they learn to learn. They are taught that it is "ok" to struggle and furthermore they are taught how to cope with their struggles vs. "block" and act out. These techniques will enhance their lives even when they are no longer being serviced. Our goal is to mediate so that the individuals we treat find their own wings through this process and fly independently.

To teach to a test will lead to memorizing, regurgitating, and forgetting; whereas, when we mediate a learner, it is life changing! It will last forever! If you are interested in discovering how your student learns and mediating them to becoming an independent learner, than FIE is for you.

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