

Talking Points for Explaining Feuerstein Instrumental Enrichment (FIE)

Motto: "Just a moment. Let me think."

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1. FIE is based on the theory that the cognitive structure of the brain can be modified. Feuerstein referred to this as Structural Cognitive Modifiability (SCM).
2. The development of thinking skills can be described through the following syllogism:
 - Premise 1: Critical thinking and problem solving skills are mental operations.
 - Premise 2: Cognitive functions are the "building block" components of mental operations.
 - Conclusion: To strengthen critical thinking and problem solving skills, then, the cognitive functions must be strengthened.
2. The Cognitive Maps for the various instruments identify several agreed-upon cognitive functions that are strengthened by completing the IE tasks.
3. The pedagogical strategy is to mediate the learner through questioning, probing, and confirming rather than telling. Feuerstein referred to this as a Mediated Learning Experience (MLE). The mediator's intention is not only to strengthen cognitive skills but also to strengthen the learner's affective domain attitudes about learning and one's ability to process knowledge.
4. The mediation process is a facilitation process similar to what is done in Discovery Learning and in the learning theory of Constructivism. Meaning is derived from the transcendence discussions, and metacognition is also emphasized as part of the mediation process.
5. Objectives of FIE:
 - Acquire independent learning and thinking. Learn to self-mediate.
 - Realize optimistic alternatives and develop a belief in one's cognitive ability. This is done by developing strategies for coping and changing from a black and white perspective to a multidimensional perspective. The mediator also conveys this belief in the learner. The learner develops insight of different perspectives and options.
 - Use a more systematic approach to stimuli, exploring the options rather than having impulsive approaches and behaviors. This enhances the executive functions of decision-making and problem solving skills. It also makes learning more efficient.
 - Develop strategies for dealing with new and difficult situations and problems.
 - Learn how to set goals and make plans (strategies) to achieve the goals.
6. These objectives are accomplished through the way the stimuli are presented in the instruments and through the mediation process of working with the stimuli, including transcendence ("bridging" so that the learner perceives the stimuli in a manner that goes beyond the immediate experience). The stimuli are constantly transformed in a variety of ways. Changes in the stimuli are repeated, not always in a linear progression, but with variations in task that also create flexibility in response and therefore in thinking. What is kept constant is that which is to be learned, crystallized, and consolidated—the basic operations, the cognitive functions.

7. FIE could supplement Cognitive Behavioral Therapy's focus on thoughts, feelings, and actions. It's another tool to help the client learn to manage the situations he/she encounters. The learner "self-realizes" that he/she has distorted thinking. The bridging helps the learner realize the impact of the negative thoughts and emotions and how they lead to negative behaviors. FIE has been shown to result in changes in behavior as well as academic performance.