

# BrainSkills

## Solving Visual & Auditory Processing Problems

3.6 years gain in just 60 hours!

*Interview with Dr. Ken Gibson*

The New Cognitive Training Program Offers Extraordinary Solutions for Students Who Struggle With Learning

“We have the capability to significantly and dramatically improve an individual’s ability to learn, whether the student is labeled LD (learning disabled), dyslexic, or ADHD. The only question is how quickly we can get the solution in front of decision makers in education and, in particular, into the hands of parents whose children who struggle with learning.”

Those are the words of Dr. Ken Gibson, president of [Growth Strategies, Inc.](#), in Colorado Springs, Colorado. It’s a bold statement, especially when placed before anyone who is aware of the impact learning disabilities can have on children and families.

Does it mean there’s really hope? Can learning skills be radically improved? Dr. DR. GIBSON is as firm in his convictions as he is in his statement, and he has the experience to back them up.

This article is a portion of an interview Dr. Ken Gibson had with Pat Wyman, M.A., **America’s Most Trusted Learning Expert** and the director of *The Center for New Discoveries in Learning, Inc.*

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PAT WYMAN: Your new cognitive skills training product is called "[BrainSkills](#)." How do you know it will work for students with learning disabilities?

DR. GIBSON: The product is new, but the concepts have been used effectively used for many years. BrainSkills is based on our training program called "Processing and Cognitive Enhancement," (PACE). Health and mental health professionals, schools, hospitals, clinics, and parents have used it for 16 years. Thousands of students and adults have gone through PACE and we have solid data to illustrate the program's effectiveness.

PAT WYMAN: How is BrainSkills different from PACE?

DR. GIBSON: PACE is intended for students with comparatively severe learning problems. That training is best given by a trained professional or a parent who's been through our provider training. [BrainSkills](#) is designed for training in the home, classroom, or workplace. It's for students or adults who need their cognitive skills enhanced, but don't require the capabilities a trained professional. It's the do-it-yourself version and the cost is considerably less.

PAT WYMAN: Why does BrainSkills target cognitive skills?

DR. GIBSON: Scientific research and our PACE training experience clearly shows that before a student can succeed with academic learning, their cognitive skills must be strong. Academics are subjects like arithmetic and social studies. Cognitive skills are underlying mental capabilities. They're the tools that will make learning academic subjects either easy or hard.

PAT WYMAN: If there are weak underlying cognitive problems does that mean there's a mental problem?

DR. GIBSON: If you mean as in mental illness, the answer is absolutely not. A weak cognitive skill could be likened to a child who has weak eye-hand coordination. By practicing certain physical exercises, the skill can be developed. It's the same with cognitive skills. Special exercises will build up a weak underlying skills.

PAT WYMAN: How do you know which cognitive skills need strengthening?

DR. GIBSON: First we test the child to determine what underlying skills are strong and which ones are weak. We score that test battery on our website. We also have parents complete a behavior assessment questionnaire to help confirm what the tests reveal. After the training is completed, we test them again to determine the effectiveness of the training.

PAT WYMAN: Which cognitive learning skills can be targeted with [BrainSkills](#)?

DR. GIBSON: Overall, BrainSkills will impact all of the mental skills that are essential if learning is to be fast, easy and efficient. Let's see, we work on sustained, selective, and divided attention; short-term, long-term, and working memory. In the auditory skills we focus on blending, segmenting, and analysis. And, there's visual processing, manipulation and visualization. Also, we work on processing speed, logic and reasoning, and comprehension.

PAT WYMAN: That's a pretty big list. The training must take a long time.

DR. GIBSON: Not at all. The entire program can be accomplished in ten weeks, with just six hours each week for [BrainSkills](#) training...an hour a day.

PAT WYMAN: Then, it must be fairly intense.

DR. GIBSON: It is, at times, but that's intended. BrainSkills is intense like a video game. The intensity is necessary to help these skills quickly become both strong and automatic.

PAT WYMAN: Do you find that kids resist what can seem like another hour of school everyday?

DR. GIBSON: Not at all. In fact, BrainSkills and PACE are designed to be unlike studying an academic subject. It's more like a mind game. It's fun.

PAT WYMAN: How many students can be trained at one time?

DR. GIBSON: Just one, and that's a necessary part of [BrainSkills](#), too. It's one-on-one training. The trainer must be able to focus on the student and give immediate feedback, both positive and corrective, and quickly adjust the procedure if necessary. It may sound complicated, but it's not.

PAT WYMAN: How do both the student and trainer know if they're making headway?

DR. GIBSON: That's part of the BrainSkills design as well. It shows up in a couple of ways. First, the training procedures require a progression in ability as the student's cognitive skills improve. Second, as they go through the training, there are procedures involving multiple skills and activities. And, the student and parent will know...they'll feel the improvements. We see an average of 3.6 years improvement after 10 weeks. Often, the improvement is greater than that.

PAT WYMAN: Will there be a noticeable improvement in school work?

DR. GIBSON: Sometimes they'll improve right away. If the student has been sufficiently far behind in school, some extra academic help – to fill in information gaps -- may be needed to get them up to speed in a subject. But the speed and ease with which they now learn will be dramatically improved.

PAT WYMAN: How would [BrainSkills](#) impact dyslexia?

DR. GIBSON: Dyslexia is a Greek word that means “trouble with reading.” That’s a broad category. There’s lots of reasons for reading problems. If there is a problem with comprehension, then fluidity of reading, attention, memory, visualization, and vocabulary are the most likely cause. If the problem is the inability to read, then phonemic awareness skills are most likely the cause. Almost always, the problems involve one or more cognitive skills. Strengthen the underlying skills, and learning to read becomes easier. No more “trouble with reading.” No more dyslexia symptoms.

PAT WYMAN: How about ADHD?

DR. GIBSON: There are children who are genuinely hyperactive and have difficulty focusing their attention, but they don’t necessarily have problems with reading and learning. They are often put on medication. Our experience shows that more than half of the kids who start cognitive training on medication are off medication at the completion of training ten weeks later. They simply find it easier to focus on their school work. The drugs are no longer needed.

PAT WYMAN: What’s the connection?

DR. GIBSON: I believe what’s adding to the problem of hyperactivity and attention deficits is a child’s absolute frustration with failure. They are being forced to be in class attempting to read and learn when their underlying learning skills are so weak that academic success is virtually impossible. Adults would be frustrated too if they were forced to go to work everyday knowing they were likely to fail. They might even act out or withdraw just like children do at school.

PAT WYMAN: You noted that parents can do this training at home.

DR. GIBSON: They sure can. That's what [BrainSkills](#) was designed for. We wanted parents to be able to take charge of their child's destiny. Getting schools to test and train cognitive skills will probably be slow...like turning an ocean liner around. Eventually, they'll be going in the right direction, but it'll take time.

PAT WYMAN: Why don't schools do this kind of training already?

DR. GIBSON: There are lots of reasons. Here's four...

1) Education hasn't kept up with the neurosciences. Teachers are taught to deliver content within a specified period of time and have not been taught much about the brain, and how children actually learn. They aren't aware of what foundational skills a student needs to really succeed academically.

2) Schools focus on strengths and avoid weaknesses, or they just accommodate the slow learner. Kids who struggle with learning may either be passed over or sent to Special Education programs often receiving more of what they were unable to do in the regular classroom. Sadly, the year long training teachers receive to obtain their credentials leaves them unprepared for the increasing numbers of children with academic or cognitive learning problems.

3) Schools may misinterpret test findings. An average IQ score may mean that the student doesn't have a cognitive problem. This is not true. An IQ is only the composite score of numerous skills tested – some of which may be very high or low – and the low skill may be responsible for the learning difficulty.

4) Effective training requires working one-to-one and many schools simply cannot budget for it. Schools may get funding for new materials but not always for additional personnel.

The need to get a child's underlying cognitive skills up to speed so they can read and learn is not fully understood by educators due to the generalized training. We find that parents must become more involved and take the initiative to get their kids what they need...and do it at home. In schools, this training can be done one-on-one by anyone the school designates.

PAT WYMAN: So [BrainSkills](#) deliberately focuses on weak not strong skills, right?

DR. GIBSON: Yes, if the weak underlying cognitive skills aren't corrected or strengthened, the child's ability to read and learn may be handicapped for the rest of their life. Think what that means for a child's future...for decisions about college, on-the-job training, careers, and even income over a lifetime. The prospects aren't very inviting. When their learning skills are trained to be stronger, options for the future change dramatically.

PAT WYMAN: It seems like BrainSkills might be good for just about anyone.

DR. GIBSON: You're right. Improved cognitive skills can help boost a student's and an adult's IQ, their ability to learn, process information, plan, and make decisions, regardless of whether or not they have measurable cognitive weakness. It'll give them a competitive edge.

PAT WYMAN: How can parents and teachers learn more about [BrainSkills](#)?

DR. GIBSON: They can click on any of the links in this article or visit our website for more information. The website is <http://www.brainskills.com>. There is a picture of BrainSkills, extensive research information and the results data.

PAT WYMAN: Thank you for your time Dr. DR. GIBSON. We have been evaluating your BrainSkills program for some time and find it to be the best cognitive skills training program available.

Visit <http://www.BrainSkills.com> for more information