
Techniques

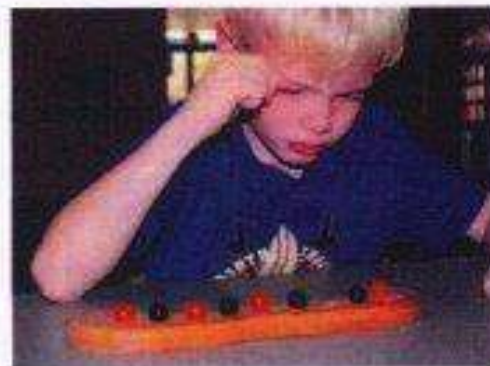
Some of the techniques used during therapy sessions to address *Exploration* are:

- **Rhythmic Writing** – Tracing motifs on a chalkboard while simultaneously verbalizing directionality and computing math problems is very powerful in helping a child focus his attention and maintain mental effort while attending to several stimuli at once.
- **Blue Book** - Key word memorization helps organize thinking in a systematic way. The student must build strategies for memorization of each Blue Book page and when entering words in the workbook, he must gather information (spelling rules, syllabication etc.) before entering the word.
- **Dictation and Copy** – The summarization of a paragraph requires a child to attend to the details of the passage, consider relevancy, and organize key thoughts in an organized manner. The paragraph must then be proofread, requiring the child to sustain attention to detail.
- **Buzzer** – Retaining an auditory sequence of coded letters and then decoding them causes the child to maintain mental effort in working memory, diminishing impulsivity. He is then required to gather information (define the word, analyze the sounds in the word) before using the word in a sentence and labeling the part of speech.
- **Puzzles**- *Square puzzles* and *Pythagoras* require the student to see a whole (abstract picture) and then break it down into parts. He must be able to consider how the pieces relate to each other. A strategic, systematic plan is then developed and verbalized by the student, all prior to building the puzzle.

Exploration at Home

How can you help your child at home?

- Provide opportunities for your child to explore! Model self-monitoring by questioning yourself aloud, “What do I need to do next? How will I do it? How can I check what I did?” Encouraging your child, then, to question *himself* through the task will help develop self-discovery.
- When your child faces a problem, help them gather the information they need to make a wise decision. Help them sift through what is and isn't relevant.
- Provide clear direction and structure for the tasks that you require of them. Have them verbalize back to you what they heard you say.
- Model a systematic approach to tasks that result in success. Such opportunities include following a recipe, building a Lego set from the instructions, making a puzzle while referring to the picture on the box, and verbally working through a math problem using logical calculation rather than guessing.
- Demonstrate how to use investigational strategies to find out information. Look up the meaning of a word in the dictionary or a phone number in the phone book. Look up needed information on the internet for something you plan on doing or somewhere you plan to go.



Exploration

Judy Topolinski, Certified Educational Therapist
Wendy Morante, Educational Therapist

The goal of education is to strengthen our minds, enabling us to think critically and learn independently. In order for this to happen there are certain "tools" that must be operating efficiently during the learning process. They help us think by strengthening our ability to reason, compare, analyze, create, justify, maintain focus, remember, plan, and self-monitor.

How these tools function effectively and ineffectively will be explained, as well as how some of these inefficiencies can be addressed implementing NILD techniques. Ideas to strengthen these tools at home will also be given.

Exploration

A primary cognitive function utilizing the use of the senses to gather information is called *Exploration*. This "building block" of thinking involves being able to systematically search for information that is needed in the learning experience. Students are encouraged to become "explorers," pursuing, seeking, and inquiring about the attributes of a situation that are most relevant to the learning objective.

When this building block is in place and functioning well, a child will be able to gather all the information needed to define and assess a problem. This involves setting goals for a task and then being able to focus long enough to figure out what is the relevant information. In other words, the student can look at a task and know what should be done and then work through the steps to actually complete the task.



When this building block is not being used or is being used ineffectively, a child may rush into tasks in a haphazard, disorganized way. He may not gather all the materials or information needed before starting the task. Since the child has difficulty defining and

focusing on goals he or she will likely change strategies repeatedly in the middle of the task. This is often a result of impulsivity and leads to implementing trial-and-error as the only tool for problem solving. Blurred and sweeping perception describes this deficiency perceiving information completely or inaccurately due to poor attention to detail, impulsivity, and inability to perceive relevancy. Children who do not have strong exploration skills often make the same mistake over and over without learning from the mistake.

A few examples of the behaviors seen when this function is deficient include randomly guessing at answers, using ineffective strategies for solving a problem, inaccurate proofreading, and rushing through a task in a disorganized fashion. A child may further have poor discrimination of letters that look alike (b and d) or sounds that are similar (confusing the short e and the short i). He may also read a math story problem too rapidly, missing essential details that are necessary to solve the problem.