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THE INNOVATORS: THE JORDAN-ADAMS LEARNING CENTER

William L. Holladay



As any discipline grows and is talked and written about, rigid structure and inflexible concepts often become hindrances to that very growth which fostered it. Certainly we have seen examples of this in education and perhaps more recently in the field of reading. The Jordan-Adams Learning Center has a simple, straightforward philosophy that circumvents this rigidity of thought; do and use anything that works.

The Center, established in Oklahoma City in 1973, is staffed by a group of professionals who found themselves dissatisfied with the inability to solve classroom problems and help learning disabled students in the formalized and structured form of mass education. Believing that they could perform a more valuable service as a specialized and private learning center, and after years of teaching, research and graduate work, these professionals serve the Oklahoma community in a wide capacity.

Neither in the Diagnostic Program nor in the Corrective Teaching Program are there any particular learning machines, materials or methods strictly adhered to. Dr. Dale Jordan, Director of Diagnosis, spends an entire day observing the client, who may be from 5 and a half years old to adult, studying and noting all possible facets that may have bearing on academic performance. The client's physical condition is meticulously and carefully documented by Center specialists, Dr. Robert L. Russell, audiological consultant, Phillip A. Walker, O.D., vision consultant as well as Dr. Jordan and Gary L. Adams, Director of Reading.

The main emphasis of the Center's program is geared toward the interpersonal aspects of the client and his surroundings. Success is felt to have been achieved when the client is able to cope and survive in his world. Believing that poor self-concept and lack of personal confidence is at the base of a wide variety of learning dysfunctions and negative behavioral and learning attitudes, Center personnel practice their own version of behavior modification. Dr. Jordan explains that "Our philosophy is to identify the specific points of error, then

teach to those points of error. In so doing we inevitably see significant changes in each child's habits, self-image, and conduct. We work toward remediating underlying causes for academic frustration where causes can be remediated. For those problems that cannot be changed, we emphasize coping skills, teaching children how to survive and thrive in areas that might always be difficult.

The tutorial program has shown an academic improvement rate of 95%. Perhaps most important is the fact that these students are now content to be at school and are better able to cope with failures and setbacks in their academic programs, thereby eliminating one of the greatest hurdles to learning.

Staff members have taken an active role in the academic community's life, conducting in-service programs, holding seminars and talks for parents and teachers as well as teaching graduate courses in surrounding colleges and universities. A considerable amount of diagnostic work is done for juvenile agencies and agencies working with indigent families. The Center has led research exploring the relationships between dysfunctions and delinquency for the Oklahoma Crime Commission as well as helping to develop techniques for lay volunteers in dealing with community problems that involve learning disability. Materials developed by the Center include: *Dyslexia in the Classroom* (Jordan), published by Charles E. Merrill (1972); *Jordan Oral Screening Test*, a phonetic analysis test; the *Jordan Written Screening Test* for specific Reading Disability; and the *Jordan Vision Screening Test* of binocularity in reading and writing.