

Arrowsmith

What claims does the company make / what does the programme target?

Relatively bold claims are made. In its programme brochure it is stated that “[u]pon completion, and with the attendant improved cognitive capacities, students are able to participate in a full academic curriculum at their appropriate grade level without the need for resource support or curriculum modification” (Arrowsmith, 2010, p. 5)

Arrowsmith is very expensive and details about its remediation processes are not available to the public. However, access to the first year of tasks is available and has been audited - www.cogaudits.org

Evidence for efficacy:

Research in support of Arrowsmith’s efficacy is presented in their own document entitled “Academic Skills and Learning Outcomes” (Arrowsmith, n.d.).

It is important to note that this research is neither published in journals nor peer-reviewed.

Evidence against efficacy:

The Arrowsmith programme claims to be founded on neuroscience research. However, it is not the case that (present) neuroscience research actually supports the use of Arrowsmith’s particular exercises to remediate learning disabilities. The Arrowsmith programme may have overzealously “filled in the missing research gaps” (Alferink & Farmer-Dougan, 2010, p. 48) between understanding of the function of particular brain areas and how their activity relates to, and can be modified by, particular cognitive processes.

What it involves:

Arrowsmith delivers a three to four year for-profit programme which replaces regular school tuition. It claims to address the root causes of learning disabilities rather than managing their symptoms. Ostensibly, claims are that the programme and its exercises are based on research in neuroscience, particularly on the principle of neuroplasticity and localisation of functions as described by A.R. Luria.

The Arrowsmith programme is delivered in a school setting by specifically trained teachers. Arrowsmith mandates a teacher:student ratio of one Arrowsmith teacher to approximately 10 students.

Arrowsmith has an online assessment process which is often implemented after the student has enrolled. Each student’s results are submitted to Arrowsmith, which creates an ‘Individual Learning Profile’ for the student, identifying their strengths and weaknesses. Once a student’s Individual Learning Profile has been created, he or she then spends approximately four periods per day, five days a week performing Arrowsmith exercises.

Price:

According to The Parent Room (n.d.), approximately \$15,000+ per student per year.

References:

Alferink, L. A., & Farmer-Dougan, V. (2010). Brain-(not) based education: Dangers of misunderstanding and misapplication of neuroscience research. *Exceptionality*, 18(1), 42-52.

Arrowsmith. (n.d.). *Academic Skills and Learning Outcomes*. Retrieved from <http://www.arrowsmithschool.org/arrowsmithprogram-background/pdf/academic-skills.pdf>.

Arrowsmith. (2010). *Program Brochure*. Retrieved from <http://www.arrowsmithschool.org/arrowsmithprogram/pdf/program-brochure.pdf>.

Arrowsmith. (2014). *Arrowsmith Research Initiatives Report*. Retrieved from <http://www.arrowsmithschool.org/arrowsmithprogram-background/pdf/Arrowsmith%20Program%20Research%20Initiatives%20-%20March%202014%20-%20FINAL.pdf>.

Arrowsmith-Young, B. (2013). *The Woman Who Changed Her Brain: How I Left My Learning Disability Behind and Other Stories of Cognitive Transformation*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

The Parent Room. (n.d.). *Arrowsmith*. Retrieved from <http://www.theparentroom.org/whats-out-there/arrowsmith/>.

Website / for more information see:

<http://www.arrowsmithschool.org/arrowsmithprogram/index.html>