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GREGORY GRAMBO

**THE ART OF
LEARNING**

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Gifted Queens Teacher Explains Art Of Learning For Parents, Pupils

by Gregory Grambo

Have any of you ever wondered what makes us unique among all other animals? Is it our ability to program a VCR, operate call waiting or replay messages left on our answering machines? Actually it is our brains' ability to process and store information.

Everything we ever saw or heard as a child, even before birth, has been recorded on our brains. There is one problem, however, our brains' filing system was so untrained as a small child that we cannot retrieve any of this information simply because our brain has no idea where it filed these images.

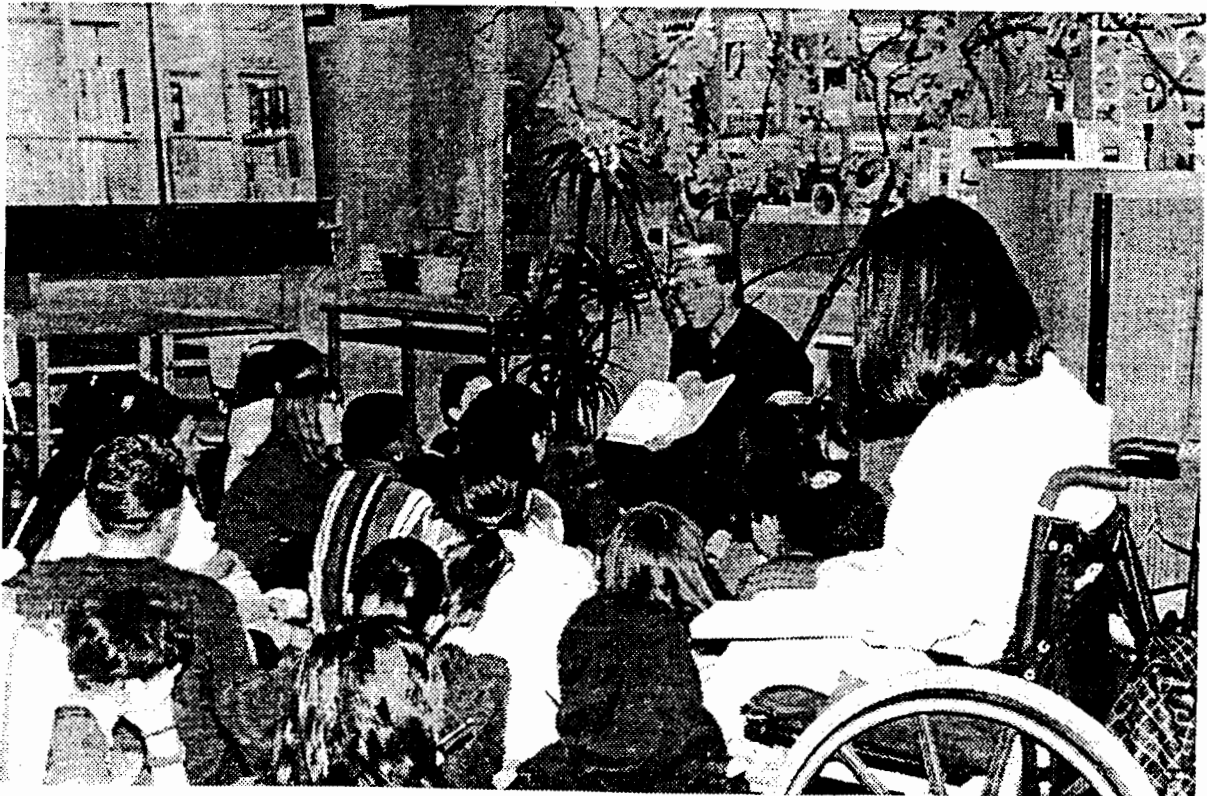
As an infant, crawling on the floor, we began to discover our environment by

seeing and touching. Our filing system began. Like a computer or file cabinet, your brain began to neatly arrange information where it could find it. Information was bunched together to form a great deal of simple habits. These habits enable us to do many of the ordinary things that happen in our lives.

Small children love to learn. They keep discovering and learning about their surroundings. Dr. Jean Piaget, a noted child psychologist, has stated that each person must, through interaction with the environment, construct his or her own knowledge.

Somewhere along the line, children begin to get bored as they get older and

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Science Teacher Greg Grambo keeps his class enthralled with a group lesson.

Gifted Teacher

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stop wanting to acquire knowledge in school. It's possible that this boredom stems from not understanding concepts or that school work has been presented to them in an uninteresting fashion.

There are many ways and styles of learning. Let us focus on the three aspects of your child's development—the physical, the intellectual and the social/emotional.

Some people are auditory learners, needing to hear in order to grasp a new concept. Others are visual needing to see to learn. If children do not understand concepts or become bored in school, then tasks must be asked of them that will invoke an interest in them while presented in a way that each learner will understand.

Most children benefit through a tactile hands-on inquiry based approach to education. In this approach, people learn by doing.

In math there are many abstract concepts for children to grasp. Numbers are not always real to them.

A hands-on approach gives them a way of connecting something real that they can touch and hold, such as rulers, cuisenaire rods and blocks, to these numbers they find so difficult to understand.

These experiences help the mind establish operational processes for making hypothesis, for developing classification skills and for constructing logical thinking patterns.

An experiential approach to education, whether set up as a group interaction or as a cooperative learning experience, is more fun for children and gives them a desire to learn.

Learning comes through the self directed activity of the child, the activity of discovery. We can not press information into the brains of our children. You can only teach by creating interest, by creating the urge to know. Encourage a relaxed learning atmosphere that motivates children to work

together and figure things out successfully.

Small children believe that the sun rises and sets around them. Children need to learn to share not only possessions, but experiences as well.

When children work together, they learn to tolerate each other and to listen to each other. Children begin to realize that there are other opinions besides their own.

Children and adults perceive the world differently, but both can gain through investigative learning. Adults feel reading is a better and faster way to gain information than is a discovery method.

Some feel that good learning requires only textbooks. I have heard parents ask time and time again for textbooks. Textbooks are great, but they are only a tool, as are projects and study skills. We can fill a chalkboard with notes and require our children to memorize chapters of a textbook, but do we really want our children to memorize a textbook or do we want them to know how to use a textbook?

I feel our job is to help our children develop critical thinking skills through their discovery of the world, using these types of tools.

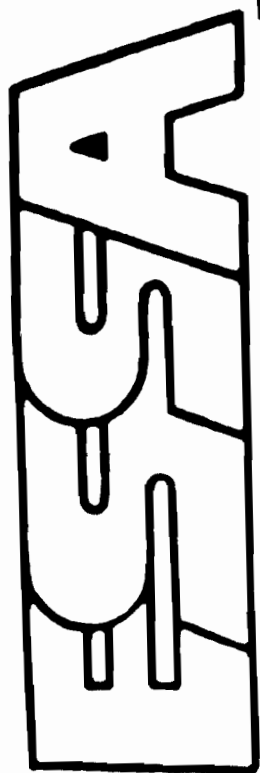
As parents, take your child on a tour of their environment. Help them and encourage them to use what they find as fuel for creative learning and growing. Sit with them, answer their questions. If they are asking then they want to know and learn. Review their work with them on a daily or weekly basis, don't wait until it is too late to help them. Show an interest, come to open school night, chaperone school trips. Together teachers and parents can accomplish a mission of helping our children grow physically, mentally, socially and emotionally.

(Editor's note: Gregory Grambo of Richmond Hill is an award-winning science teacher at I.S. 227 in East Elmhurst. He is respected by parents and extremely well liked by students.)

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ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION
OF NEW YORK

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THE ART OF
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THE ART OF LEARNING

Gregory Grambo

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JOIN US AT SATURDAY SCIENCE 1996!

Our Saturday Science Convention will be held this year on November 16, 1996 at Francis Lewis High School.

This is a most stimulating event focused on developing science skills in Grades K-9. It gives educators the opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences.

The atmosphere is exciting, enthusiastic and valuable for all who attend.

Last year we had sixty hands-on workshops. We hope we can do even better this year. If you have a special hands-on project or experiences you would like to share, please contact:

Rose Blaustein
P.O. Box 7
Franklin Lakes, NJ 07417

Telephone: 201-891-1951

Your help and cooperation will be greatly appreciated.

AUDUBON ECOLOGY CAMP

Darylle Brent

Most of us believe that the National Audubon Society is devoted solely to delighting in the beauty of birds and in ensuring their survival. This is WRONG! Spending a week at the Audubon Ecology Workshop Camp in Greenwich Connecticut proved it to be so much more than that.

Accurate and accessible scientific information was available from extremely personable, patient and well-informed educators both verbally and by hand-out materials. This allowed me to make the most of a unique sensory experience without being concerned with the need to take extensive notes. A small notepad was sufficient.

The entire experience gently overwhelms the senses with exquisite colors and shapes, wonderful fragrances, mellifluous sounds and tantalizing textures. It is a week away in sanctuary and preserves, with trips to meadows, wetlands, beaches, deciduous forests and taking one's place in the scheme of things as nature intended.

It is an experience well worth pursuing. The City Gardens Club sends scholarship applications to the public schools during the spring term. I urge you to pursue the experience, especially since their generous scholarship underwrites over 85% of the total cost.

My visit was chock filled with so many outdoor, indoor and "classroom friendly activities" that the week flew by. I didn't want to leave the beauty and serenity so soon.

By their actions, it became vividly clear that the Audubon Society, by its own mission statement is committed "to conserve and restore natural ecosystems ... focusing on birds and other wildlife ... for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity." As a result, they have a new member and supporter!