

Learning How to Improve Learning



Terry Jernigan

Professor of Cognitive Science, Psychiatry, and Radiology, Director, UCSD Center for Human Development

CURRENT RESEARCH

Identifying factors that promote learning and personalized education

The education system in the United States favors a particular phenotype - the academic phenotype - that is, people who have a particular set of skills and behaviors. All people have the capacity to learn new concepts, but the current system works best for one particular group, allowing them to excel in school while others struggle. Dr. Terry Jernigan and the Center for Human Development are researching the emotional and motivational factors associated with learning in children as a pathway for adjusting and modifying the learning process towards personalized education. It is believed that if a child is emotionally stimulated by a subject, their motivation for learning is increased, making it easier for the child to acquire and store new information. Dr. Jernigan does basic research on brain and behavioral differences in children, but her findings can't be put to use without translational research to implement her findings. By investigating the underlying factors that contribute to differences in individual learning abilities, educational technology tools can be designed and implemented to intervene in the educational system and help those students previously underserved with current methods. Dr. Jernigan will create new models for translational research in education by working with educators to develop effective tools for teachers that adapt to the individual needs of their students. This will lead to new techniques for manipulating the factors that enable people to learn quickly, guiding children to learn in different ways to achieve greater mastery so that we may ignite the spark of discovery in more children.

The Center for Human Development at the University of California, San Diego, directed by...

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AFFILIATION

 University of California, San Diego

EDUCATION

- Ph.D., in Clinical Psychology, 1979, University of California, Los Angeles
- M.A., in Psychology, 1974, University of California, San Diego
- B.A., in Social Sciences (summa cum laude), 1973, Transfer-University of California, Irvine, University of Austin, Texas

AWARDS

- The Huttenlocher Lecture, 2014
- Recipient of Astor Visiting Lectureship, Department of Experimental Psychology, Oxford University, UK, 2013
- Invited "Distinguished Scientist" Lecturer, University of Pittsburgh, Department of Psychiatry, Fall 2013
- Chancellor's Award for Contributions to Affirmative Action in Assisting in Diversifying the Career Staff Workforce at UCSD

RESEARCH AREAS

Education, Behavioral & Development

FUNDING REQUEST

Your contributions will leverage and support the key translational work based on the fundamental data from Dr. Jernigan's experiments. Funding will help develop and implement new learning platforms that teachers and students need and want, and which will fit into the classroom and work with the current education system in the right ways. New interdisciplinary workspaces are needed to allow teams to conduct experiments that test personalized approaches, and funding for this program is needed.