



***Attention & Learning:***  
***Moving the Focus Beyond Focus***

**Dr. Amy Moore**  
Cognitive Psychologist

# Who Am I?

---

- Cognitive Psychologist
- *Director of Psychology & Research* at LearningRx
- Host of **The Brainy Moms Podcast**
- Former teacher, curriculum specialist, & teacher educator
- MA in Early Childhood Education & PhD in Psychology
- Board-Certified Christian Counselor
- ADHD Mom & Mom with ADHD

# What are we talking about?

---

- What is focus? What is attention?
- Why focus gets so much attention
- Other cognitive skills and learning
- What you can do
- Q&A

# A top parent concern

*“My kid can’t focus.”*

# What is focus?

*“The ability to direct mental effort to the most relevant information in the environment.”*

***Most kids can focus,  
But their focus might  
not be on the most relevant  
piece of information.***

# Percentage of Day Our Mind Wanders

10% - 60%

Seli, P., Beaty, R. E., Cheyne, J. A., Smilek, D., Oakman, J., & Schacter, D. L. (2018). How pervasive is mind wandering, really?. *Consciousness and cognition*, 66, 74–78. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.concog.2018.10.002>

# How Often Our Brain Shifts Focus

4 times

per second

## Likely causes of off-task “focus”

Tired

Hungry

Sick

Stressed\*

Bored

Unmotivated

Anxious

Defiant

# Big cause of off-task “focus”

Hard Task

Weak skills



Stress

*Distraction isn't always  
about focus...  
it's about frustration.*

# Types of Formal Attention



# Types of Attention

Focus on one  
task without  
getting  
distracted

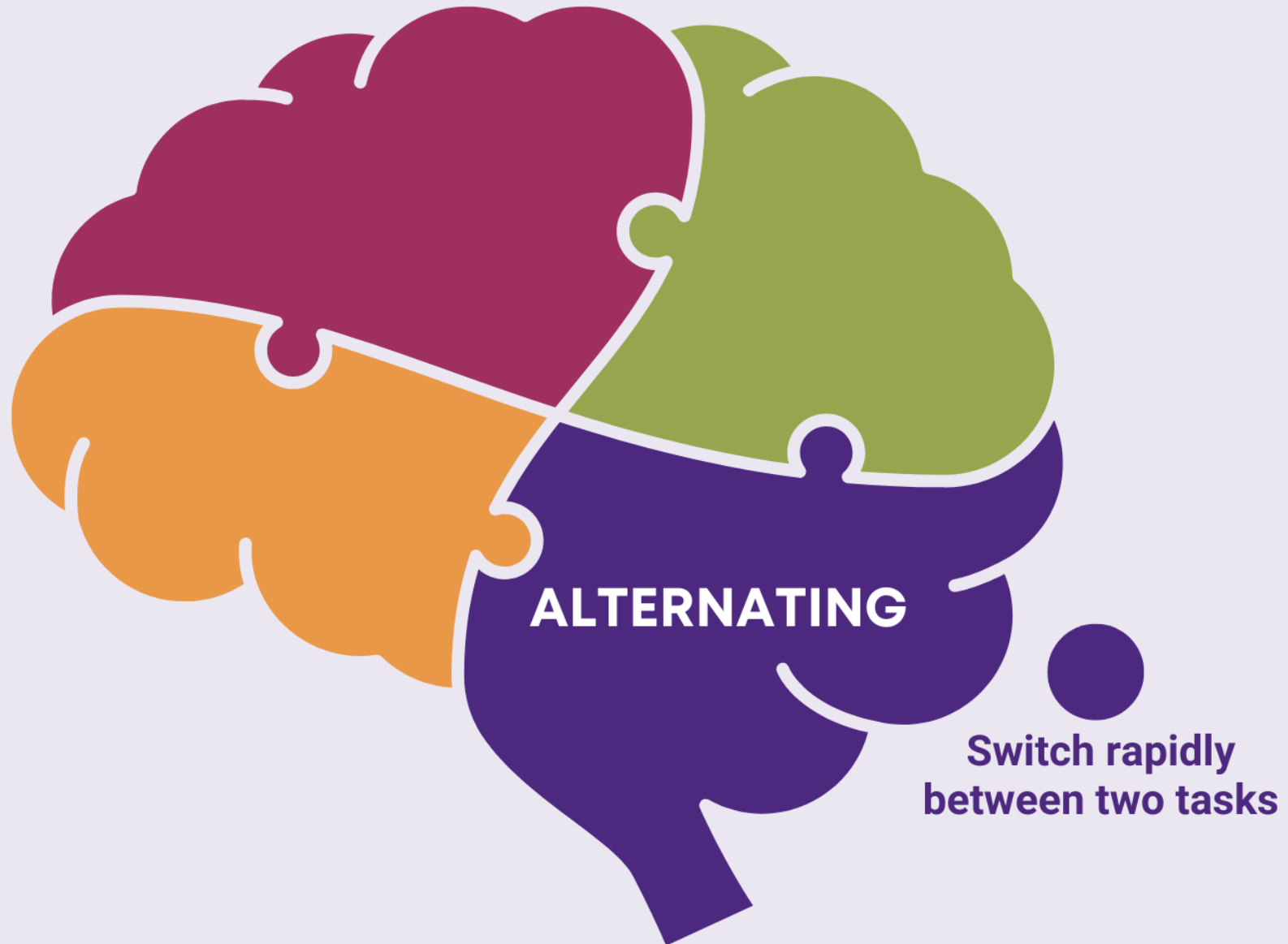


# Types of Attention

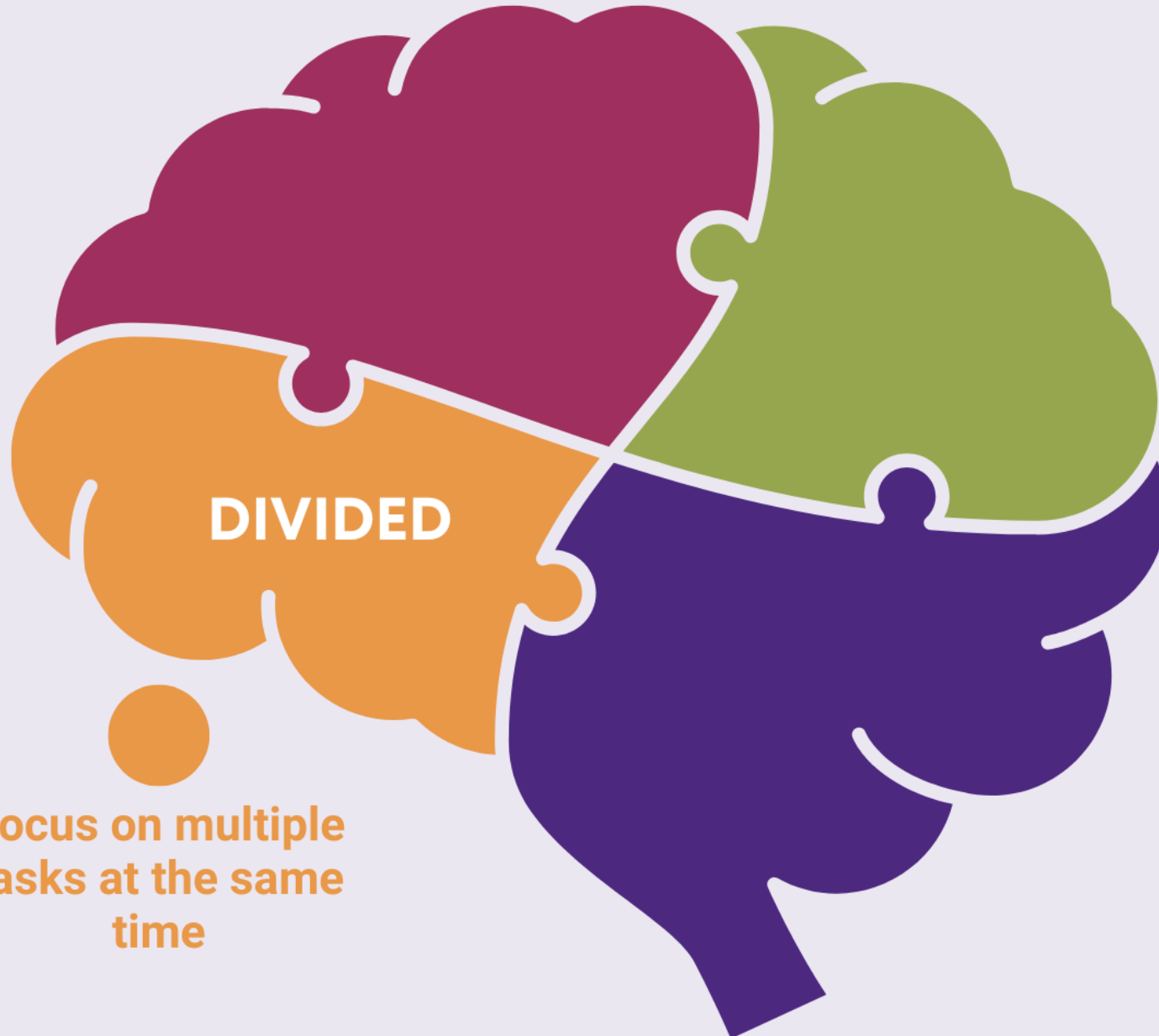


Focus on one  
thing while  
ignoring others

# Types of Attention



# Types of Attention



Focus on multiple  
tasks at the same  
time

# Four Types of Formal Attention

Focus on one task without getting distracted



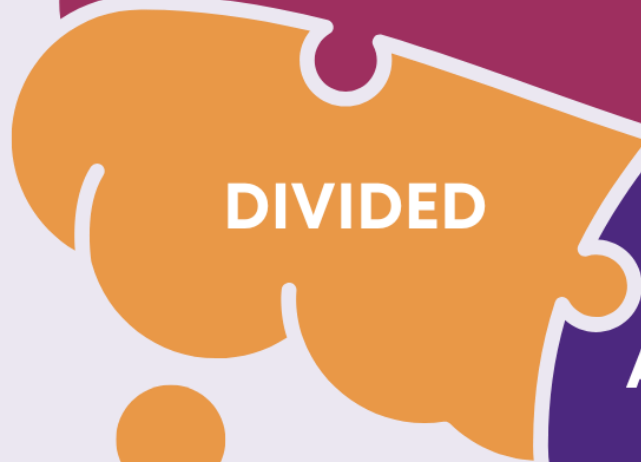
**SUSTAINED**

Focus on one thing while ignoring others



**SELECTIVE**

**DIVIDED**



Focus on multiple tasks at the same time



**ALTERNATING**



Switch rapidly between two tasks



# Attention problem?

- Can't remember instructions
- Easily distracted by noise or movement
- Can't read or study for long periods
- Misses important details
- Can't solve problems without getting upset

# Attention problem?

- Misunderstands steps
- Can't follow multi-step directions
- Has poor reading comprehension
- Starts but doesn't finish tasks
- Loses things

# Why So Much Attention on Attention?

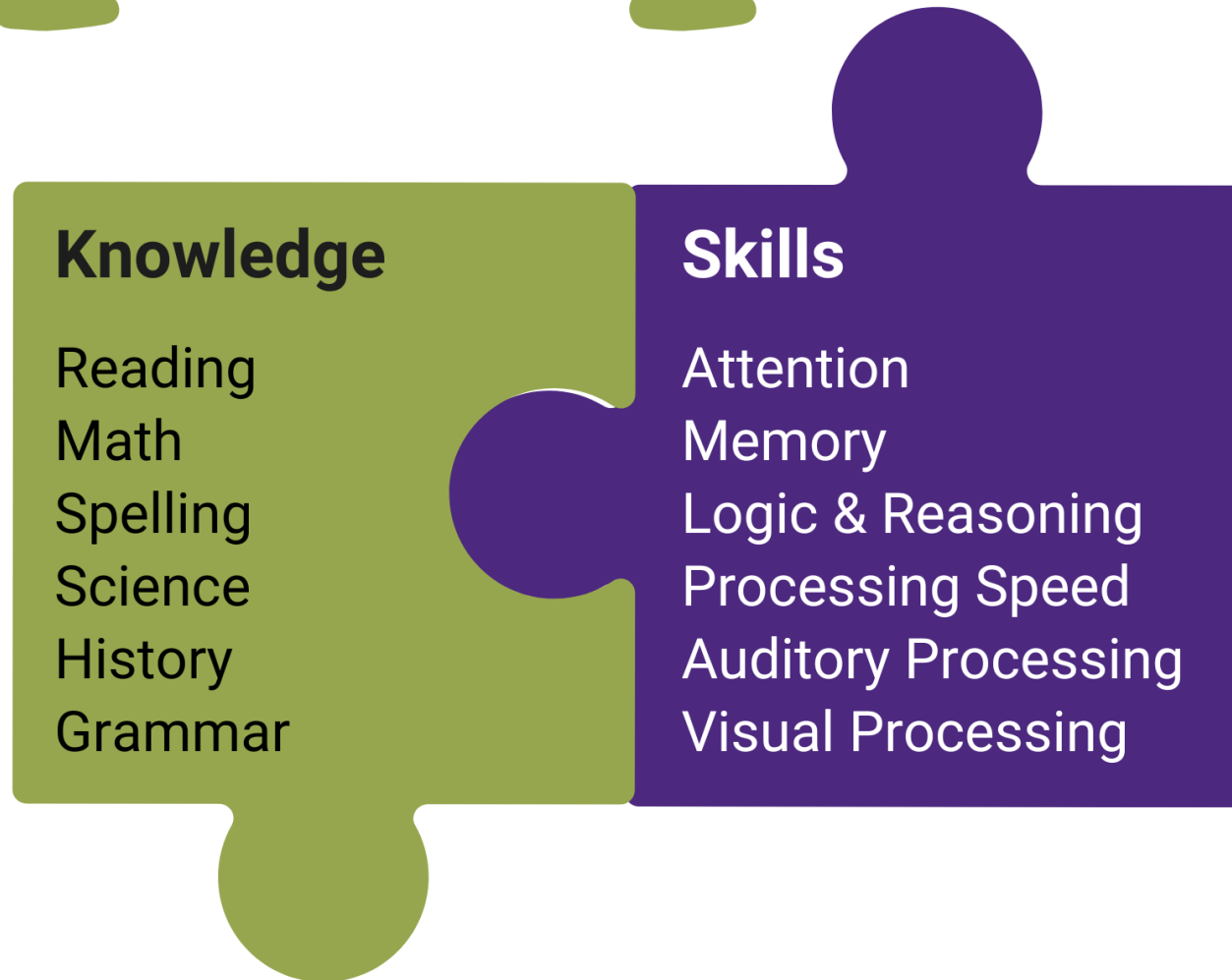
- **Misconceptions about ADHD & learning**
- **Broad view of focus & learning**
- **Not enough “attention” on other cognitive skills**

***We need to move the focus  
beyond focus and attention when  
it comes to learning struggles.***



# What are Cognitive Skills?

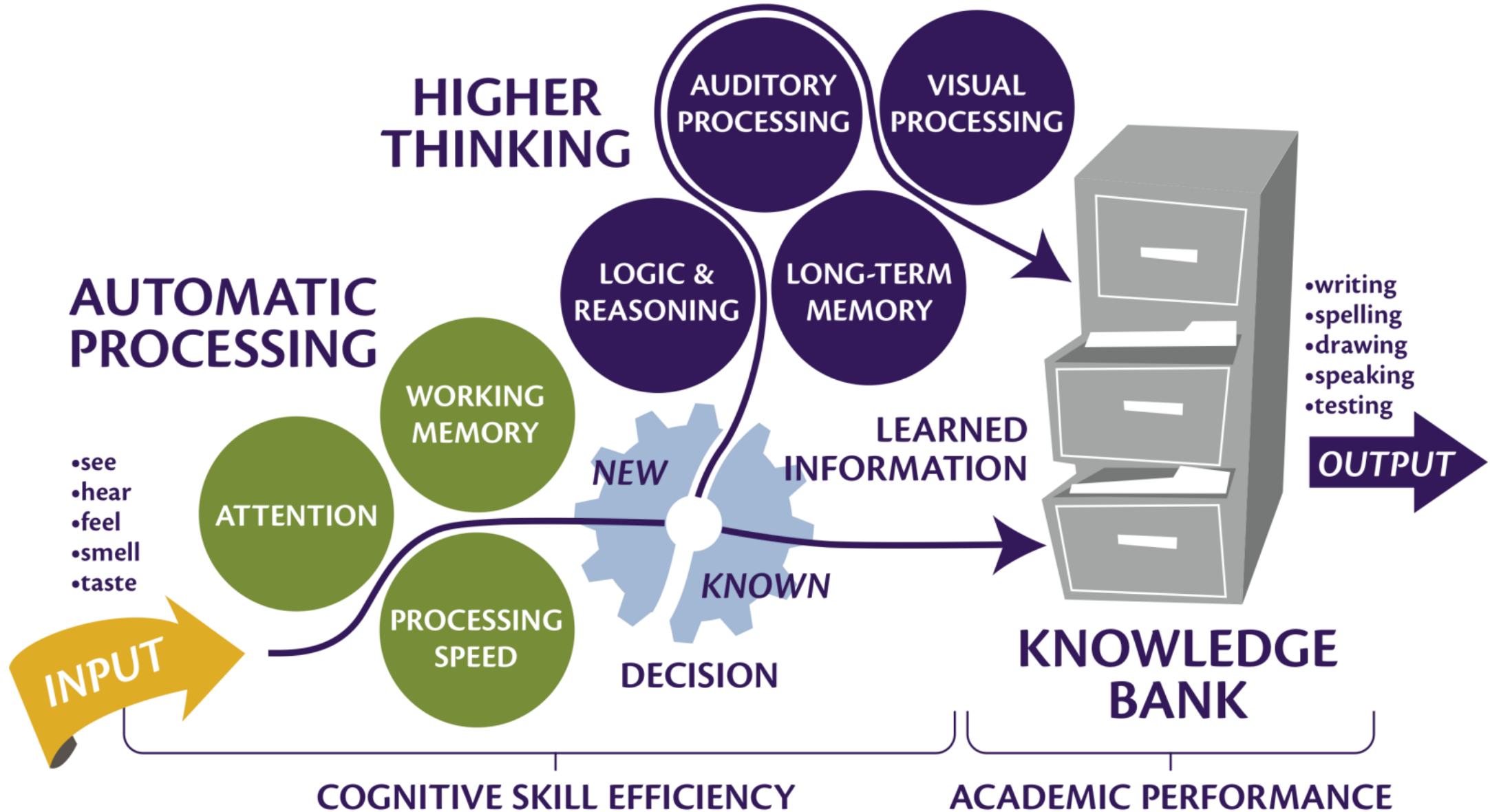
# 2 PARTS 2 SMART

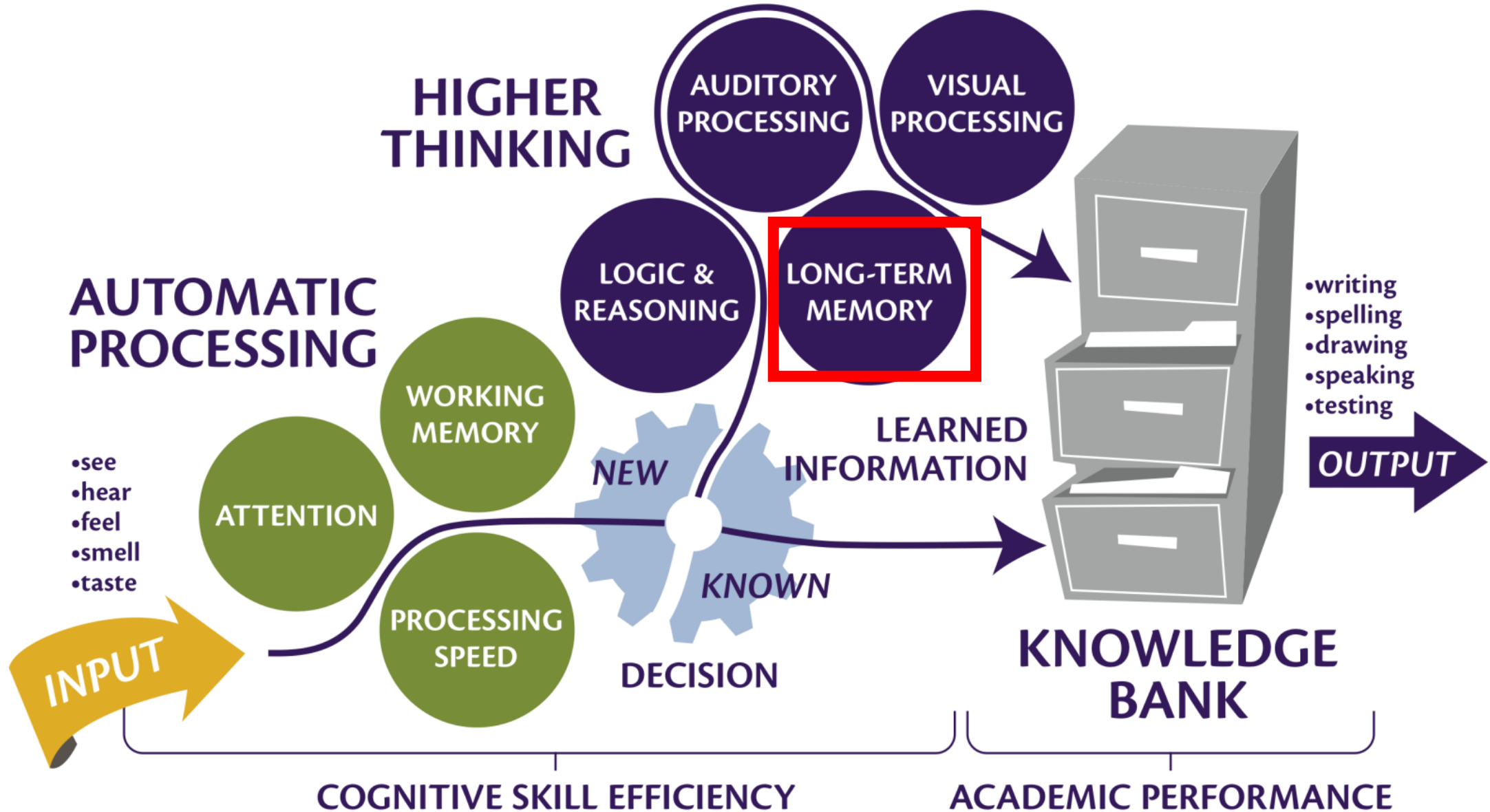


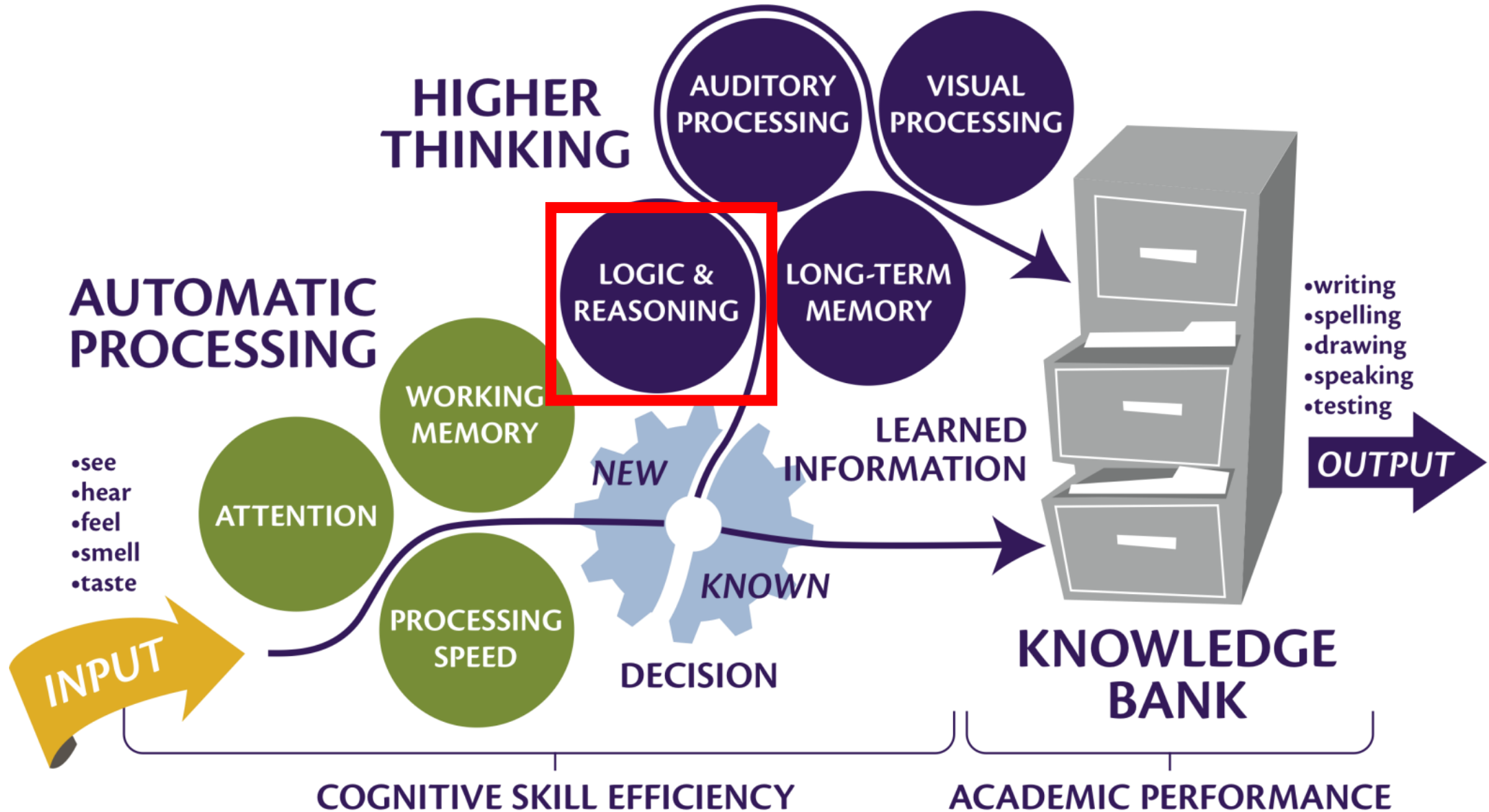


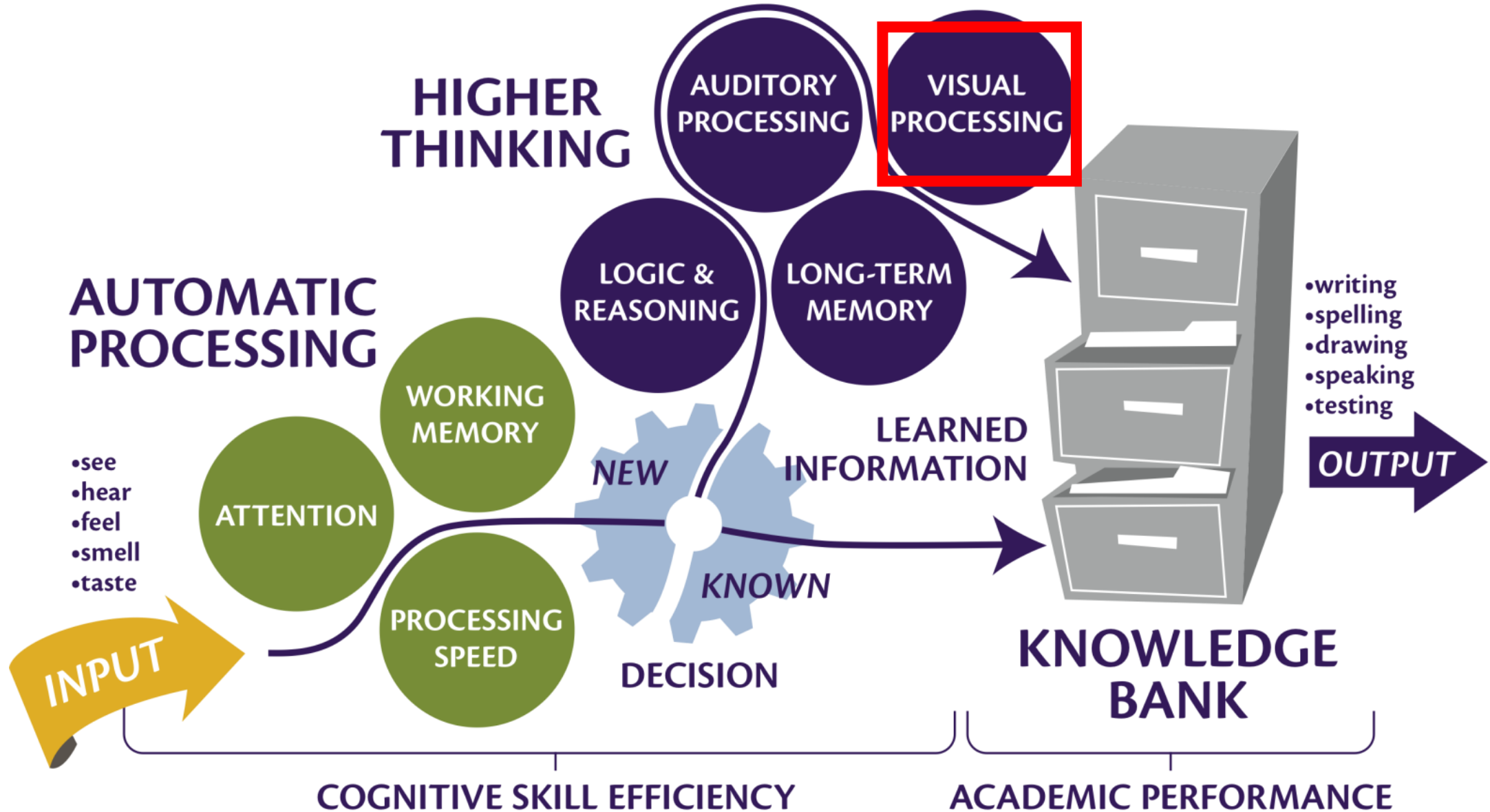
**Let me demonstrate...**

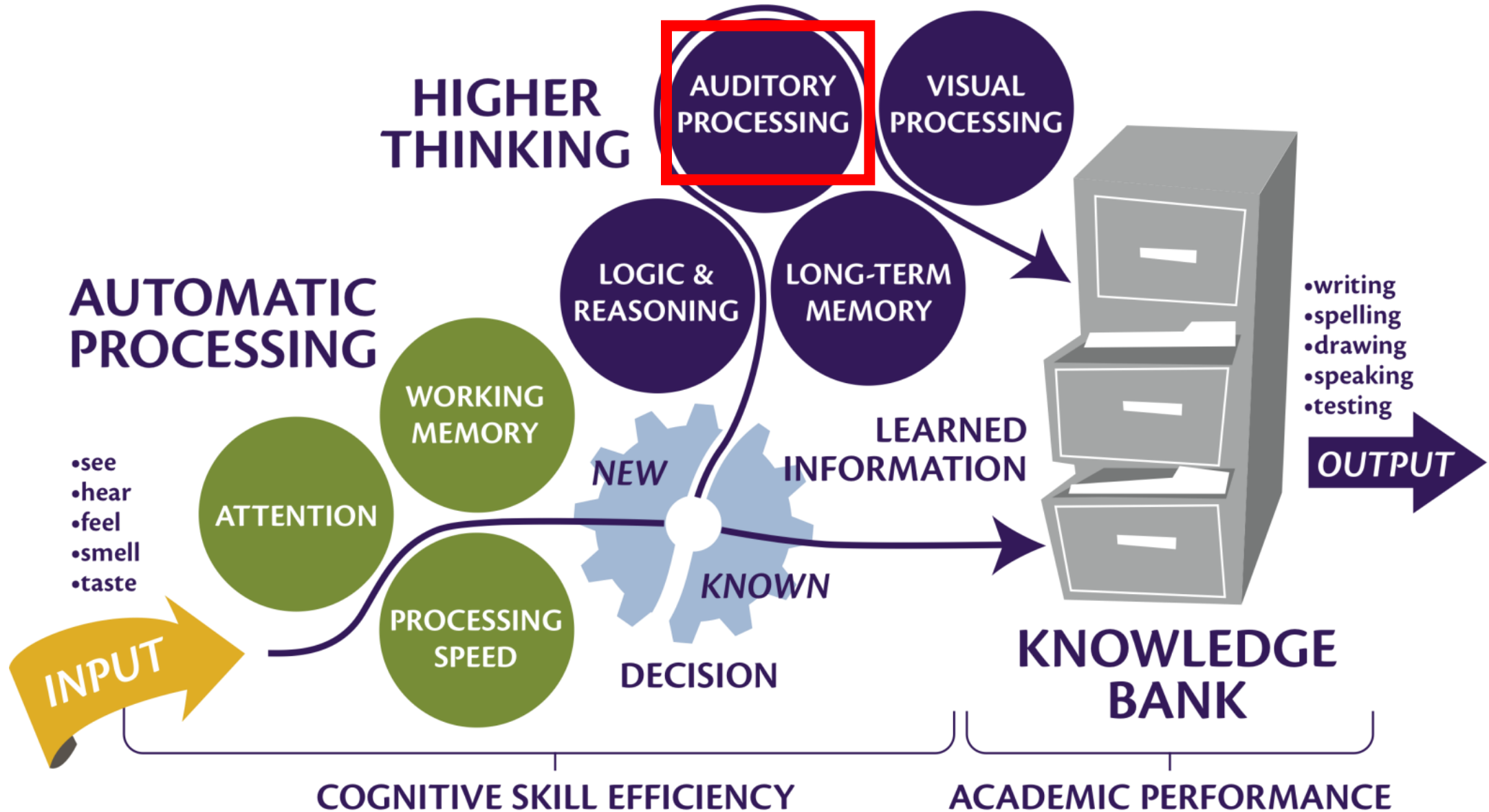
**N-O-T-G-N-I-H-S-A-W**

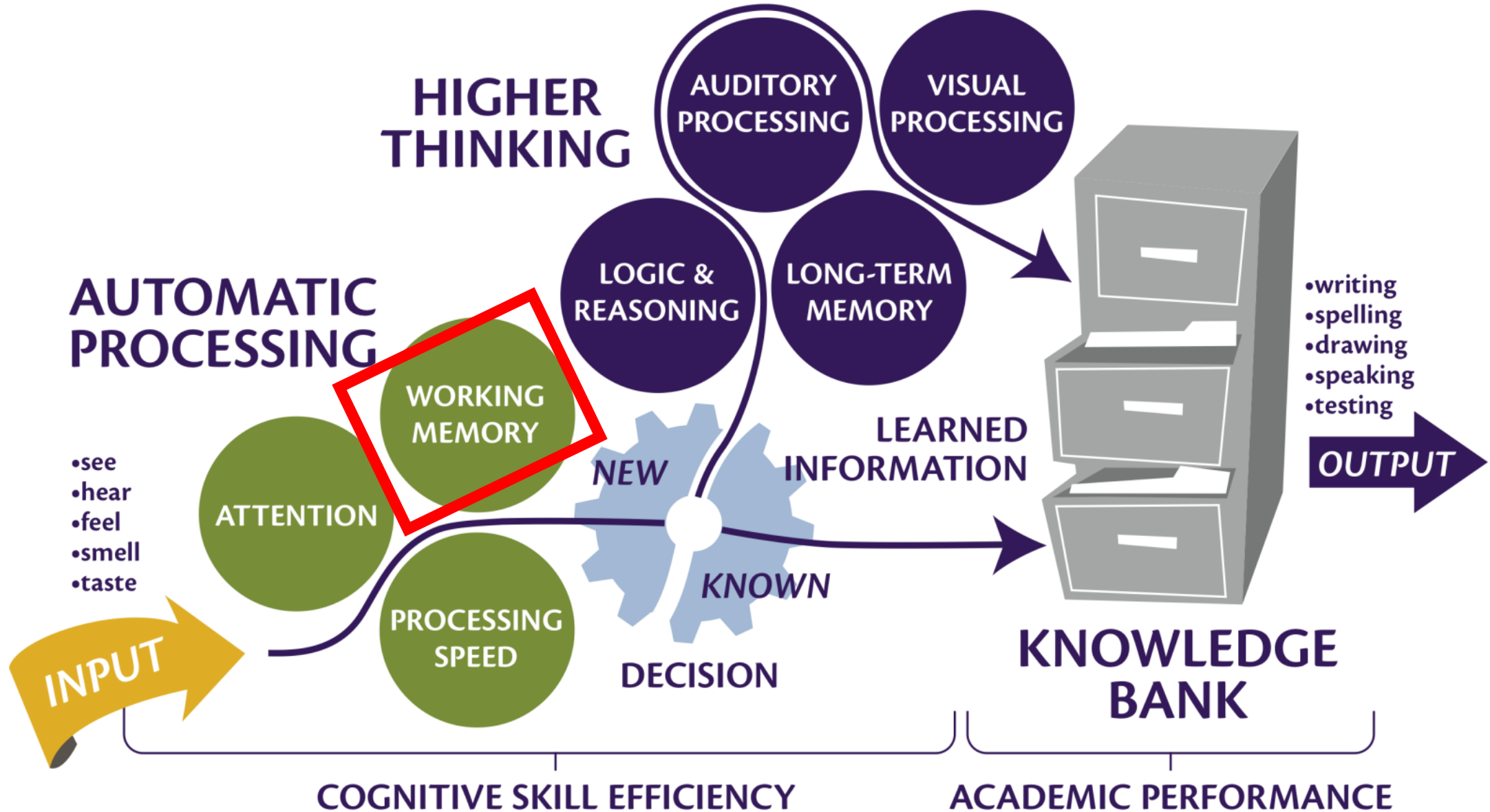


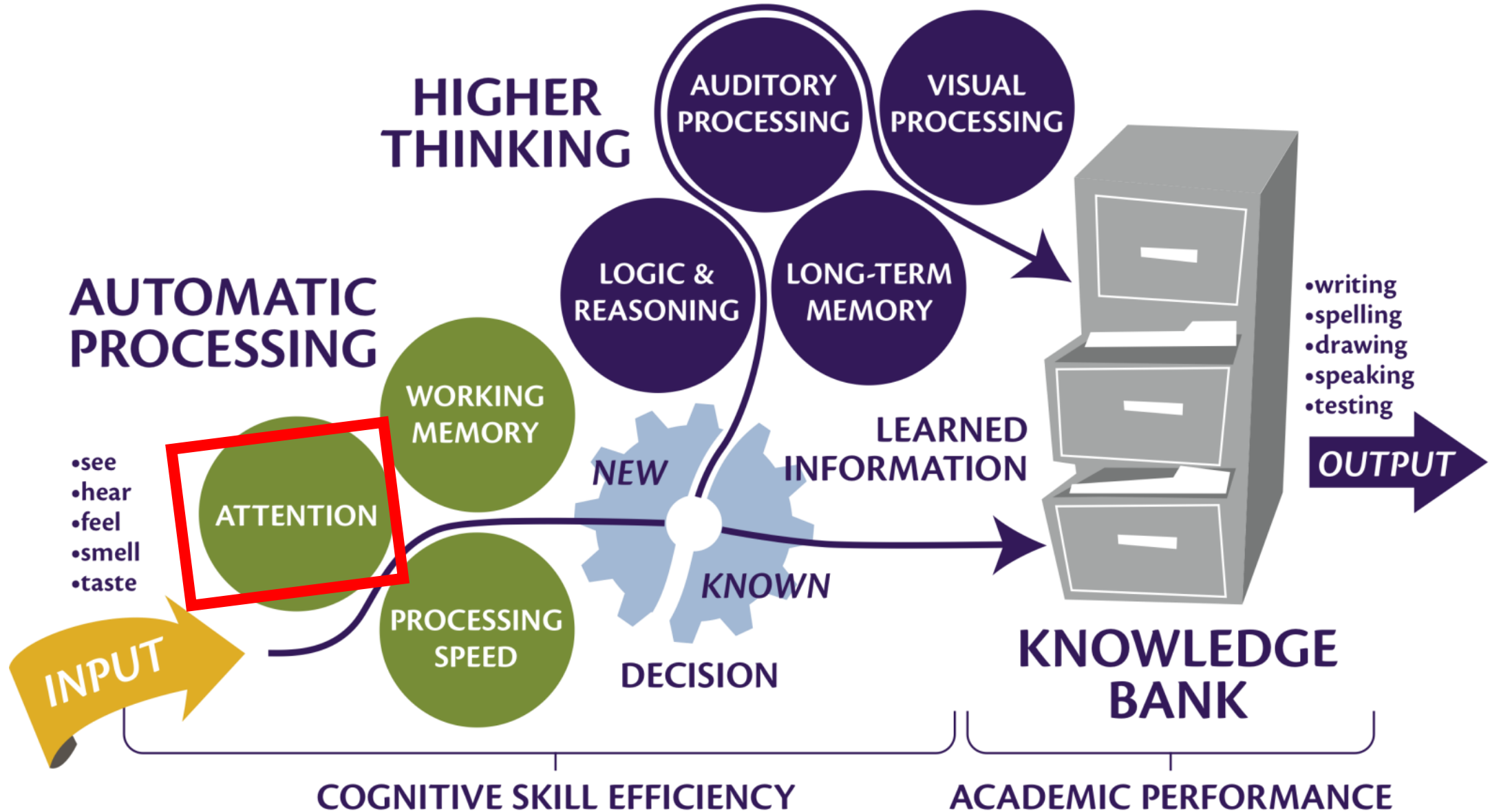


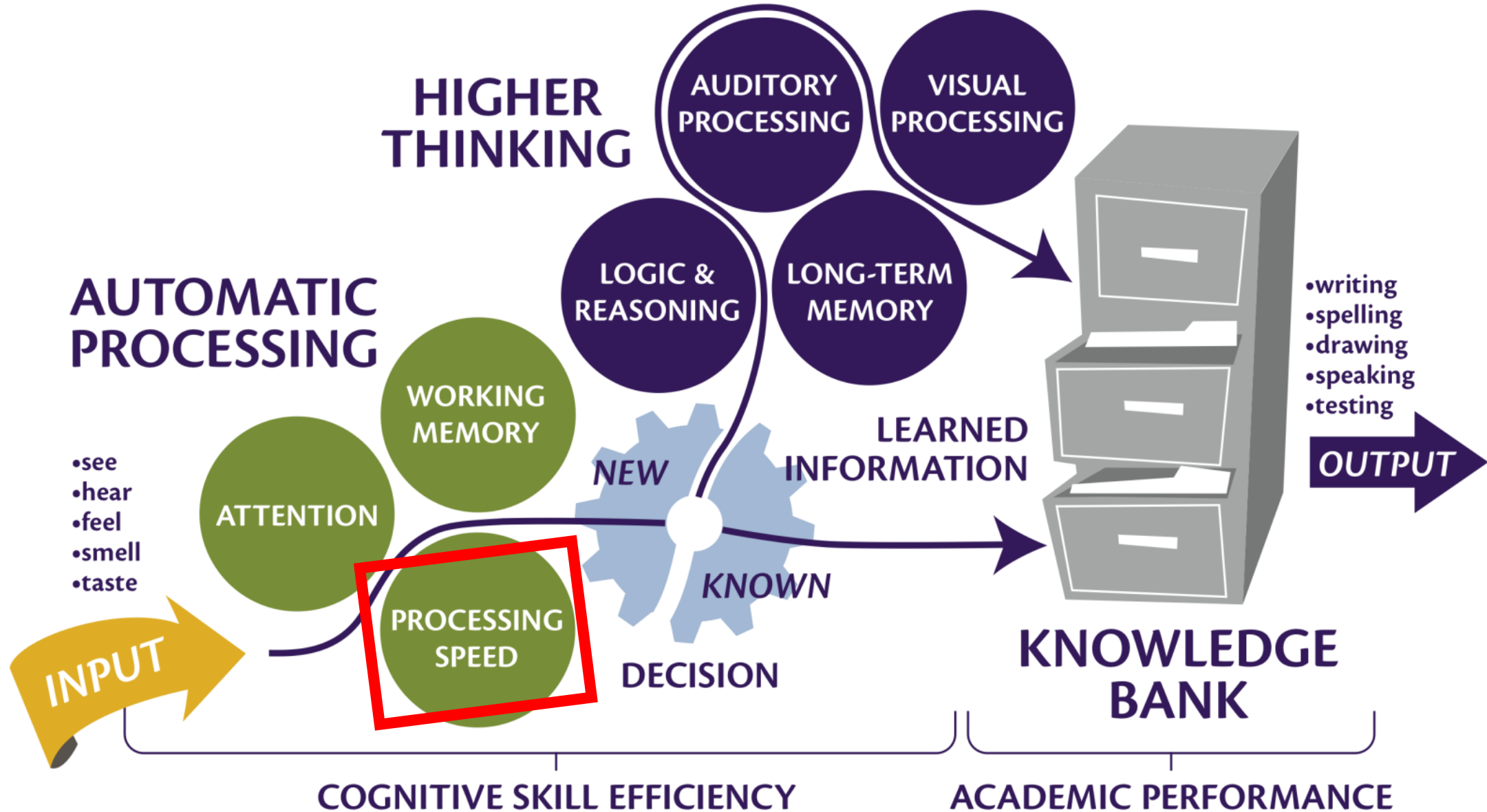


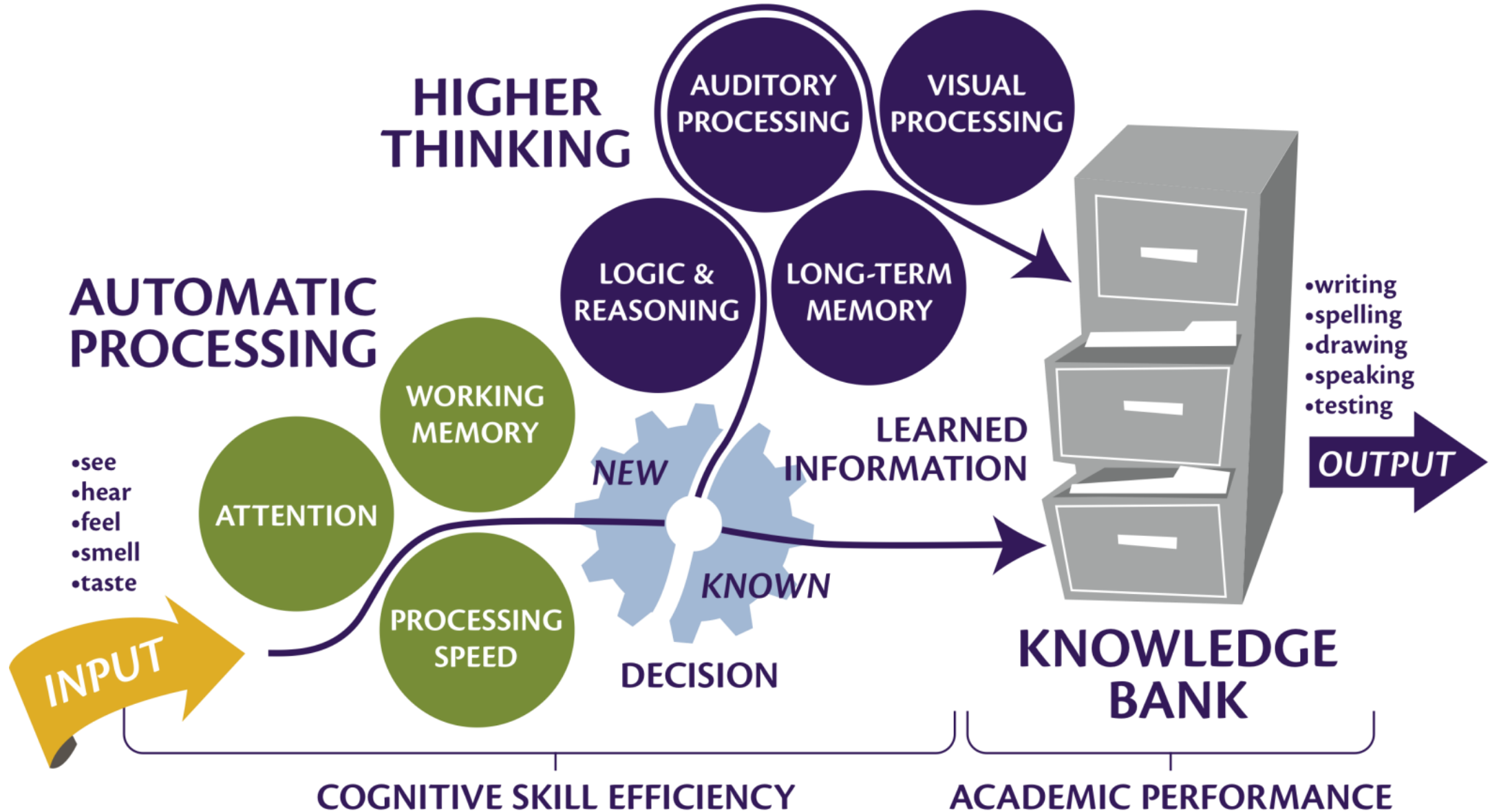










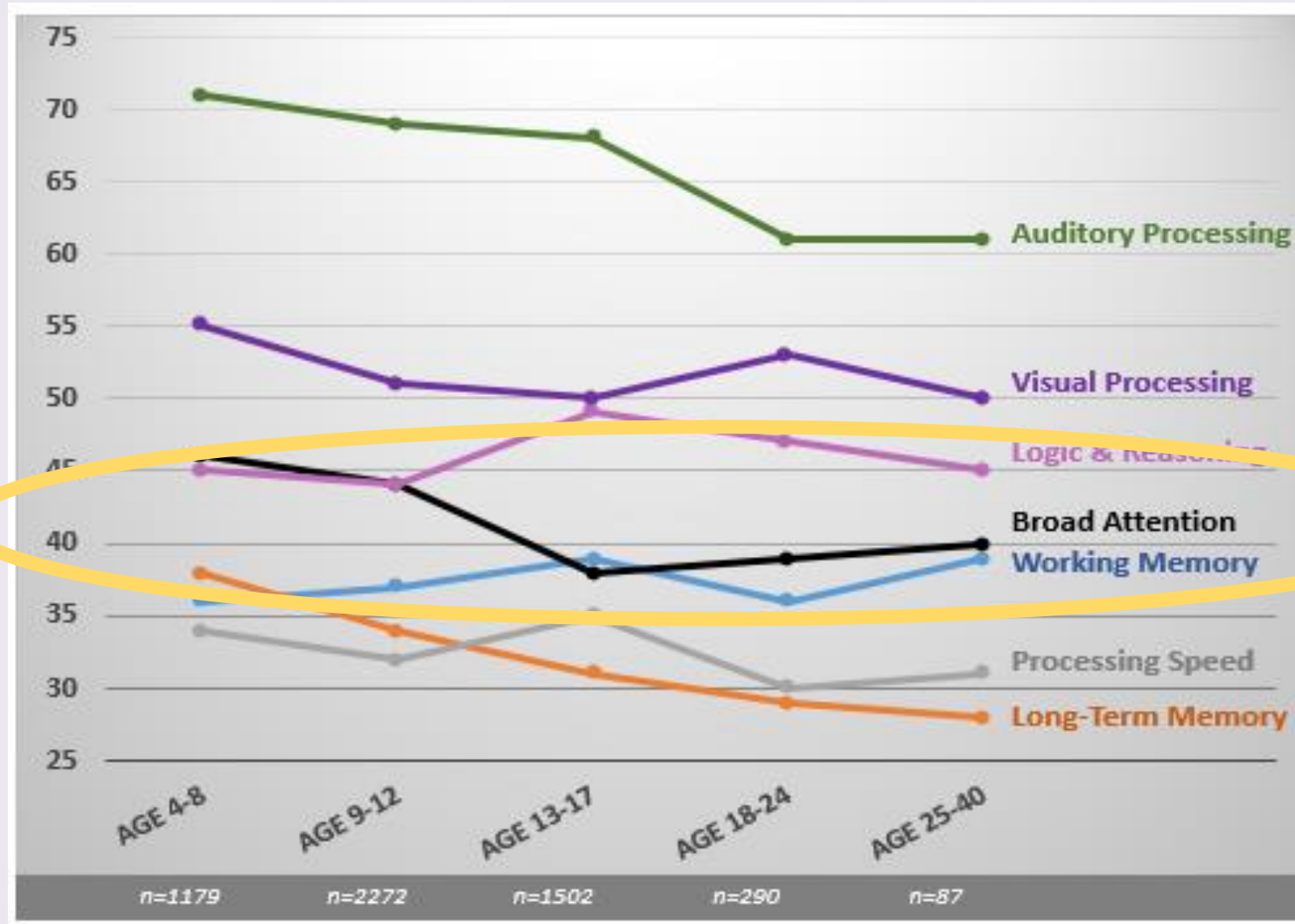


# Cognitive Skills and School Tasks

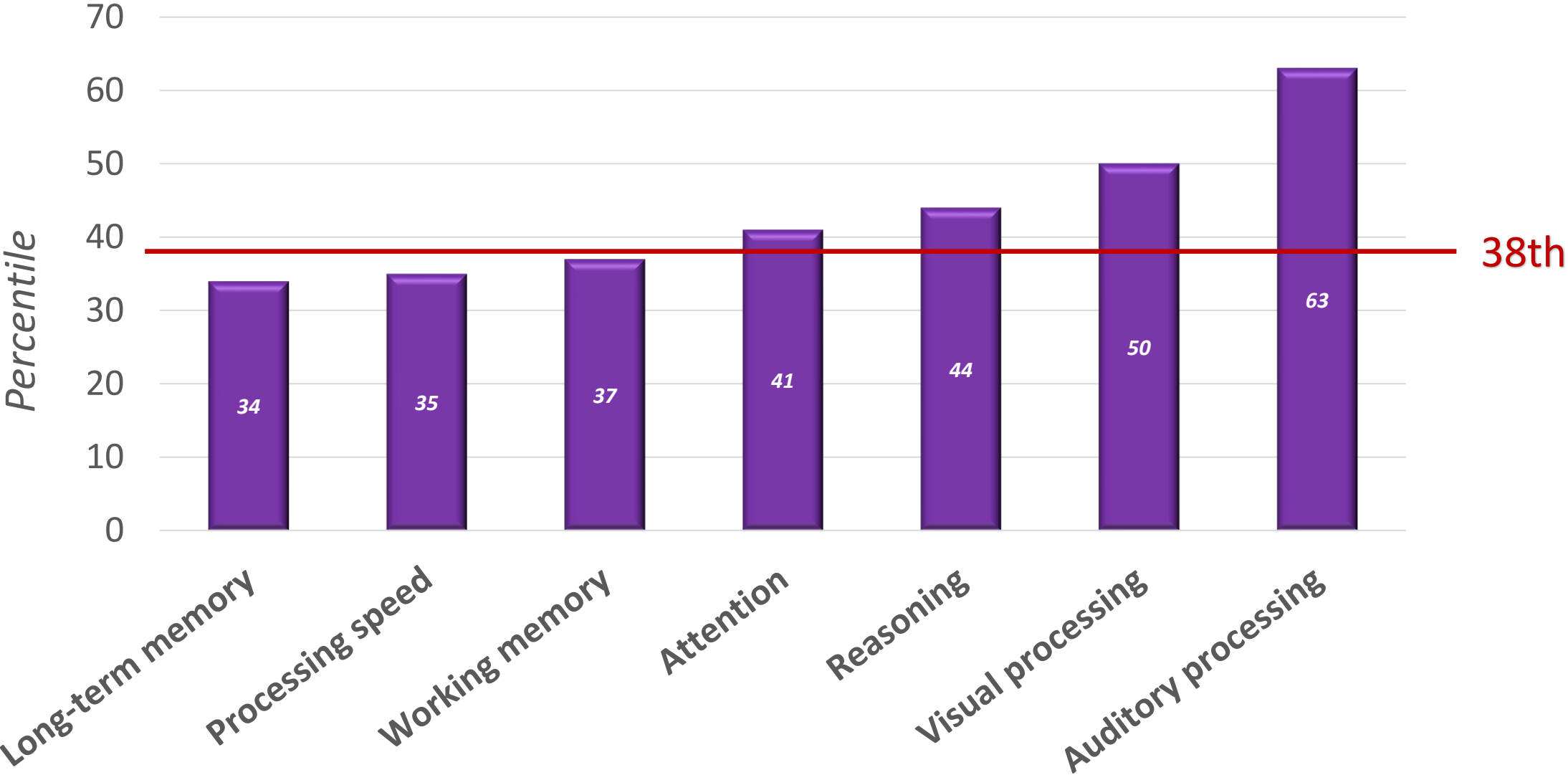
<b>Learning to Read</b>	<b>Reading Comprehension</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Math</b>
Reasoning	Reasoning	Reasoning	<b>Reasoning</b>
Visual Processing	Visual Processing	Visual Processing	Visual Processing
<b>Auditory Processing</b>	Auditory Processing	<b>Auditory Processing</b>	Auditory Processing
<b>Long-term Memory</b>	<b>Long-term Memory</b>	Long-term Memory	Long-term Memory
Working Memory	Working Memory	Working Memory	Working Memory
<b>Processing Speed</b>	<b>Processing Speed</b>	<b>Processing Speed</b>	<b>Processing Speed</b>
<b>Attention</b>	<b>Attention</b>	Attention	<b>Attention</b>

# Cognitive Skills and ADHD

# Cognitive Profiles from Ages 4-40 in ADHD (n = 5,416)



# Cognitive Profiles from Ages 5-76 in ADHD (n = 8,276)



Moore, A.L. & Ledbetter, C. (2023). *LearningRx Research Results and Client Outcomes: 2010-2022*.

***“My kid can’t focus.”***

# What parents probably mean:

*“My kid is struggling with something so much that he can’t do it in a reasonable amount of time (or at all) so instead of sticking with it, he finds something else to do or think about doing.”*

# Big cause of off-task “focus”

Hard Task

Weak skills



Stress

# How do we help improve cognitive skills?

# Games for Better Cognitive Skills



Apples to Apples  
Battleship  
Bejeweled  
Blink  
Blokus  
Bop-It  
Brain Age  
Chess  
Connect 4  
Cribbage  
DDR  
Gobblet

Legos  
Logic Links  
Mad Gab  
Mancala  
Pac-Man  
Perfection  
Puzzles  
Rummy  
Rook  
Scrabble  
Sequence  
Set

Simon  
Skip-Bo  
Slapjack  
Squint  
Stare!  
Stratego  
Sudoku  
Tetris  
Uno  
Where's Waldo  
What's GNU?



# Troubleshoot What Looks Like Inattention

- Tired
- Hungry
- Sick
- Stressed\*

**Struggling learners may need a  
formal intervention:**

**Cognitive Skills Training**

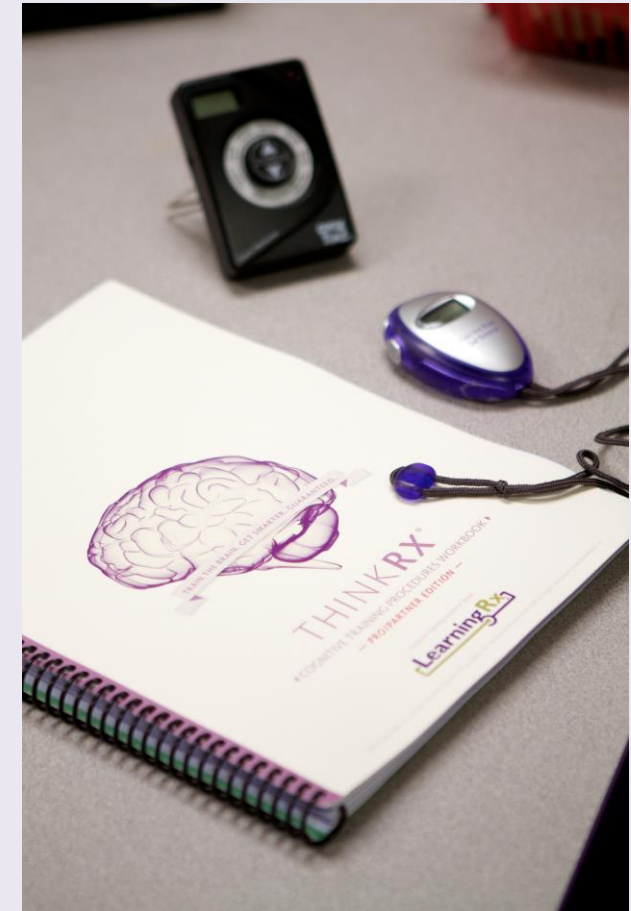
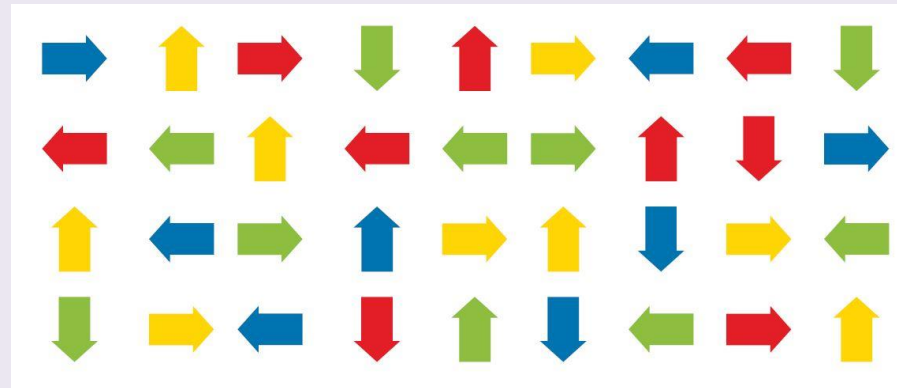
**Targeted, repeated, intense mental tasks  
based on neuroplasticity**

# One-on-One Human Delivery

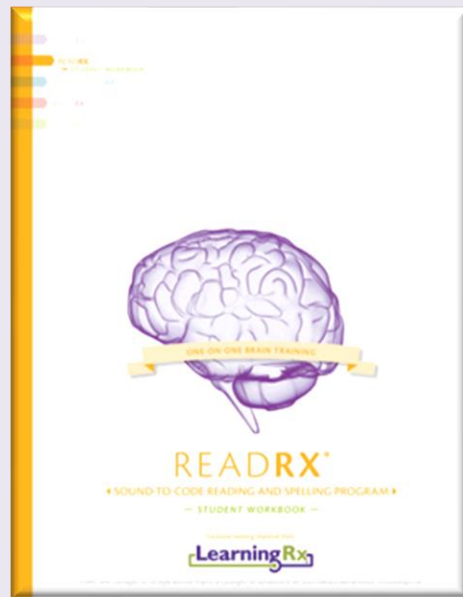
---



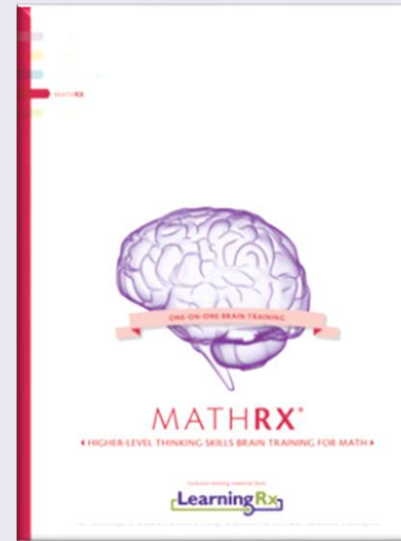
# 1000+ Hands-On Training Procedures



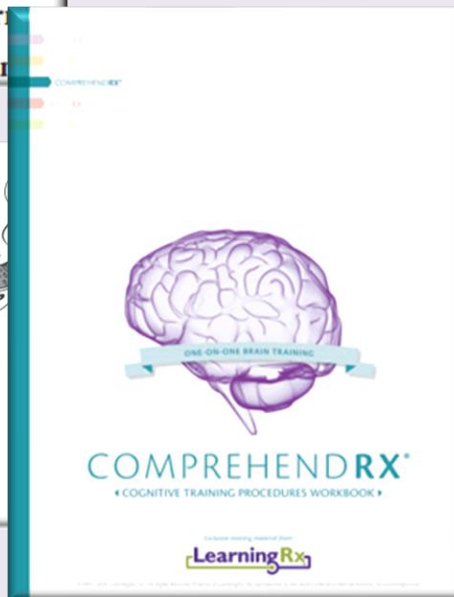
# Reading & Math Remediation Programs



storb	churnt
firth	sherct
barch	thirld
klerp	sworf
norch	blurnd
blurd	herxt
flirx	jarnk
smarz	glern
hurnt	zurrt

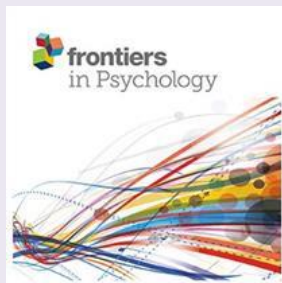
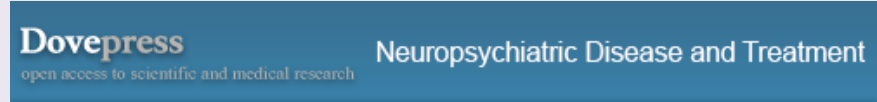
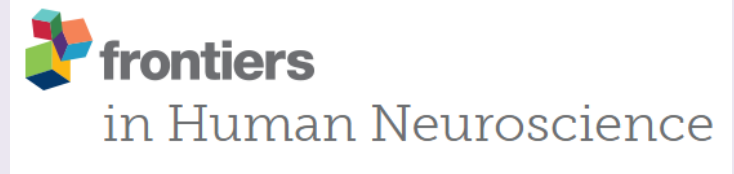
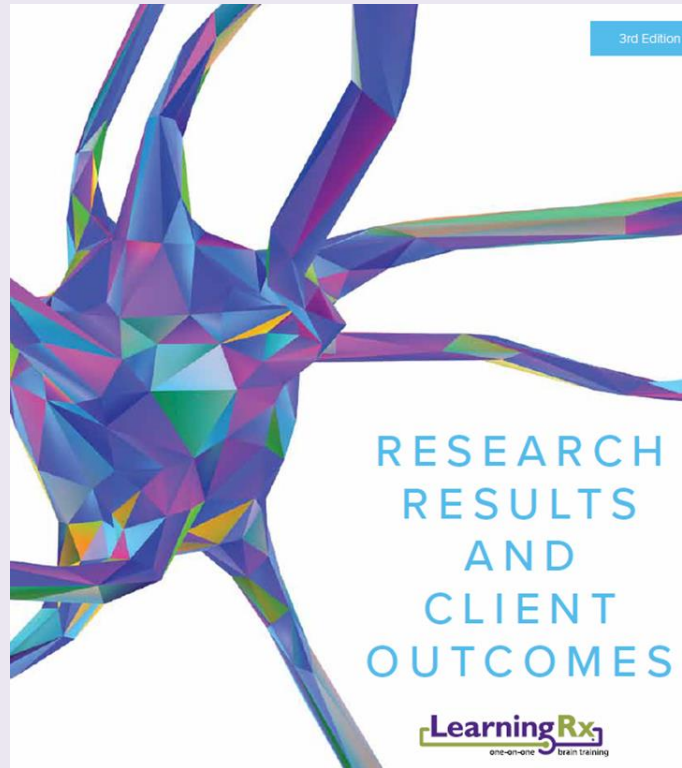
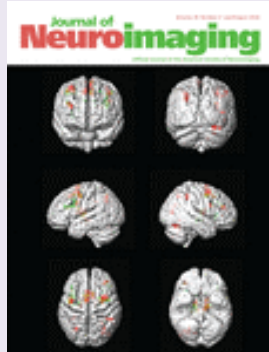


Fraction	$\times \frac{2}{2}$	$\times \frac{3}{3}$
$\frac{2}{3}$	/	/
$\frac{3}{4}$	/	/



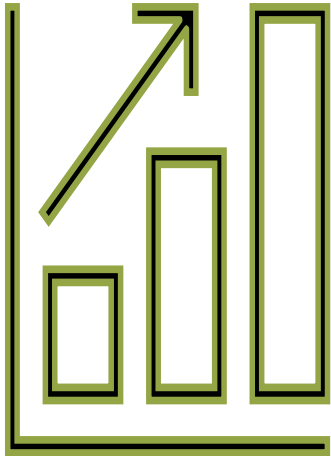
936	29	936	916	907
756	17	756	746	739
953	47	953	913	906
468	75	468	398	393
909	95	909	819	814

# Published Research



# Published Research Results

## *Significant Cognitive Improvements*



- Memory
- Speed of processing
- Reasoning skills
- Visualization
- Attention
- Auditory & language processing
- Overall cognitive efficiency

# Published Research Results

## *Real Life Improvements*



- Confidence & self-esteem
- Self-discipline
- Cooperative behavior
- Academic & work performance
- Sleep habits
- Sports performance
- Attitudes about school



# Expertise You Can Trust at LearningRx



Training neurodivergent brains for 30+ years



Trained 130,000+ kids & adults



Centers in 45 countries



Oversight by psychologists, neuroscientist, audiologist, & education specialists



Peer-reviewed research

Find my podcast  
**[www.TheBrainyMoms.com](http://www.TheBrainyMoms.com)**

Find information on cognitive training  
**[www.LearningRx.com](http://www.LearningRx.com)**

# Free Stuff!



# Questions