

## Interactive Multimedia Learning Solutions with a Direct-to-Student-and Teacher Training Model using Adaptive Technology as Tools for Big Data and Assessment



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“LEARNstyle is putting a new lens on how we can engage students, how we can assess students and how we can use large information to help drive decision-making in classrooms by teachers.” - D.J. Cunningham

**CEOCFO:** *Mr. Cunningham, would you tell us about LEARNstyle?*

**Mr. Cunningham:** LEARNstyle is a company that is revitalizing education using multimedia and a differentiated instruction style. Effectively what we are doing is looking at education and LEARNstyle is putting a new lens on how we can engage students, how we can assess students and how we can use large information to help drive decision-making in classrooms by teachers.

**CEOCFO:** *What does that mean on a day-to-day basis?*

**Mr. Cunningham:** It has two components to it. We have a direct-to-student-and-teacher training model. We also have core products that we are developing. On the training side, we are invested in training students on what is known as a system for adaptive technology. This is a technology that has been pulled from special education and things like voice recognition or text speech. What we do is start showing students how they are able to use that same technology that specialized people can use but use but use it for every type learner. The concept around this is that all students learn differently and what is essential for some is actually beneficial for all. It is taking the learnings from special education and bringing it into mainstream classroom. On the product side, this is where we start looking at a lot more multimedia and a lot more big data. We are looking at creating tools that assess students learning preferences and then presents those learning preferences to teachers so that teachers are more able to decide which instructional strategies to use with the different types of students in front of them.

**CEOCFO:** *Would you tell us about the general atmosphere and how you stand out among other products and services in your segment?*

**Mr. Cunningham:** What differentiates us is our keen focus on special education. We have really learned that special education is the tip of the spear when it comes to pedagogical practice and change for educational technology tools being utilized in education. When we see a lot of products and services in our space are mainstream focused and they are not very different from one another. There are many people that are doing something similar but it is very much in the questionnaire format. The challenge is when you are using questionnaires is you are making an assumption that students have a high level of reading competency. When we look at mainstream classrooms we know that is not the case. The questionnaire is misunderstood and therefore inaccurate. We have taken a gamified approach where students do not have to read anything. We have converted the questionnaires into video games so students are playing video games as we learn what type of learners they are.

**CEOCFO: *How did you come to recognize that tools for special education would be good for everyone?***

**Mr. Cunningham:** It was through a personal journey. I was diagnosed with a disability in fourth grade as well as ADHD. I struggled to cope with the challenges I had through grade school and high school. It was towards the end of high school I was trained to use these tools and it turned my life around quickly. I was using them on a daily basis and I started to recognize that it was probably good for more than just me. One of the first observations I had was at university, I was using a tool that could read out loud to me so I could hear my mistakes. One of the things special education does well is differentiates instruction. What that means is they recognize they can learn in different ways. When they are teaching, they are ensuring that they are using a multimodality instructional style with visuals, a talking component, there is often a hands-on component. Where we are generating a lot of interest is school districts that are struggling at integrating differentiated instruction into their mainstream classrooms. We are working with teachers to make the transition.

**CEOCFO: *What is the business model?***

**Mr. Cunningham:** Our business model is very much focused on how we are able to reach the masses by creating scalability. What I mean by that is we are taking all the learning from our in-field practice and learning how we are able to turn those into web applications that are much more scalable so our impact can grow exponentially.

**CEOCFO: *What have you learned so far?***

**Mr. Cunningham:** Some of the biggest learnings that we have had in education is that you are competing in an environment where many teachers in administrative districts are accustomed to getting things for free. So it has been a unique challenge to identify the pockets of funding that allow us to have a school board spend on our different products and services. Your traditional marketing strategies generally do not apply in this industry and it is very much about relationships and relationship building and being strategic and tactful.

**CEOCFO: *Do you have funding for your next steps or are you seeking partnerships?***

**Mr. Cunningham:** No at this point we are generating more than enough revenue on a training consultant side for the development of our various tools and products. What we have learned in moving away from our competencies, which is the teacher-direct-to-student services by creating products and tools, is that we are not a development company by nature, we are outsourcing all of that. Therefore, the need to find development partners to help us carry forth these ideas is one of our next steps, which is to find a specific strategic partnership with a small company that is willing to partner with us in order to move forward. We are looking at an equity transaction on that in order to get the party very committed to what we are doing. When you ask what we have learned, that is a big lesson we have learned; the first stabs at software we did by outsourcing everything and that has proved to be much more challenging.

**CEOCFO: *What is your geographic range?***

**Mr. Cunningham:** The main area of work is in Ontario, which is central Canada. From there, we have spread nationally where we are doing a lot more large workshops. We are also down in the US doing similar work where we are being brought in to do conferences and keynote presentations and bring the expertise we have around this adaptive technology and bring it into mainstream education at the larger convention level. Geographically we are a North American product at this point however the main area of student work is in the province of Ontario.

**CEOCFO: *Are all subjects equal in your approach or are there subjects that lend themselves more to what you are doing?***

**Mr. Cunningham:** One of the key aspects that differentiates us from competitors is we are not subject focused, we take a functional focus approach. The main difference between the two is when you take a subject specific focus you are really teaching to the specifics of that subject whether it be math or English, whereas when you take a functional focus we start looking at the over-arching strategies that kids need in order to be successful in all of the various subjects they have. What I mean by that is when we look at students, we categorize every activity they do into six large buckets. These range from idea generation to problem solving to reading comprehension. We train kids on strategies to be effective in each of those areas. When they are effective in each of those areas, they can apply those strategies to whatever subject they have in order to be successful. We are very much looking at foundational skill set to allow somebody to be a life-long learner and be successful in life even beyond the academic realm.

**CEOCFO: *What is a good age or grade for students to start?***

**Mr. Cunningham:** We find that starting students around third grade is a natural place for them to begin taking this functional approach. That is the time they are starting to learn various strategies when it comes to things like writing and research. By taking the focus away from specific subjects and putting it into a larger bin of research or organization, they

start developing that foundation at a young age, that just simply grows with them as they progress through their academic career.

**CEOCFO: *Why pay attention today to LEARNstyle?***

**Mr. Cunningham:** LEARNstyle is at an exciting point leading in education. It is taking the focus away from things like classroom management where a lot of focus has been for a long time and simple education and technology tools to put an emphasis on how we support teachers and educators to be more efficient at that teaching. In turn, it will allow them to be much more effective at increasing their overall student achievement and outcomes.

