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'Brain Gym®' Exercises - Part of E.P. Woman's Learning to Learn Program

Helen Cox discovered

Edu-Kinesthetics in her office. Now she runs a program aimed at teaching people to how to learn

EAST PEORIA - It was only after Helen Cox sought a chiropractor for her own health problems that she discovered Brain Gym®. Now she helps people learn to learn by stimulating the brain.

In her East Peoria offices, she conducts health and education oriented programs developed for learning disabled people and others to discover how to learn more easily.

After being treated by the chiropractor in the early 1980s, she began reading books on Brain Gym® at his office and at the library, attending conferences and taking correspondence courses.

Brain Gym® exercises teach people to discover their inner potential by stimulating their brains.

"There's a whole world of information that I didn't know existed," Helen said. "I read books and what fascinated me first was iridology." Iridology is a science dealing with a person's iris. The lines, dots, spots can be indicators of weaknesses in the body.

Friends began asking her to read their eyes to assess their physical condition and "soon it was a full-time hobby," she said. Her husband advised her to start charging a fee or go back to work in a hospital.

A graduate of Forman High School in Manito and the Methodist Hospital School of Nursing in Peoria, she is a registered nurse.

She used her kitchen to see people until it became inconvenient for her family. Then she moved her program to the family's den and had a desk. Finally, in June 1987 Helen accepted an invitation from friends to join them in their East Peoria office.

She now conducts her "Options in Health and Education" programs in a small home located at 240 E. Washington St. in East Peoria.



Helen Cox . . . Helps people learn

Each program begins with the "Brain Gym® exercises" that are, based on a program developed by Dr. Paul Dennison of Glendale, California.

Helen said that Dennison was learning disabled and increased his ability to learn by crossing the midline of his brain through body movements.

By doing exercises that force people to use parts of the brain that have not previously been used or are blocked, they can increase their capabilities of learning, Helen said.

"We have scads of potential that we never tap into. It's a matter of finding that potential," she said. "It's all inside."

Stress problems may be reduced through this program, she said, adding that this is largely due to the fact that learning disabled persons become frustrated and build tension when learning does not come easy.

"Those who have difficulty in reading also have stress problems," Helen said. "When learning isn't as it should be it robs them of energy they need to learn. In a relaxed atmosphere they can learn."

Stress reduction techniques such as the Brain Gym® exercises inherently build self-esteem and confidence." she said.

Through Brain Gym® exercises students discover how to learn with the whole brain through simple natural eye movements – a combination of the mind and body working together.

In one Brain Gym® exercise, "Tracking," a student's eyes follow lines made by the instructor with a pencil in her hand. During the exercise Helen observes the eyes to check on coordination of the eye muscles.

Another Brain Gym® exercise, "Lazy Eight," involves the students drawing on the blackboard with their right hand, then using their left hand and finally both hands together.

"This helps with reading as it crosses the visual midline," she said.

Another exercise is to "cross crawl." This exercise involves raising one leg and then crossing the body with the opposite arm to touch the elevated leg. It is designed to make both hemispheres of the brain work together.

She said that these activities really work in helping students learn and that schools could do well to employ such methods.

"I don't think they [school professionals] know about Edu-Kinesthetics," she said.

She said that schools can destine learning disabled students to failure because so much emphasis is placed on grades and what students should know at a certain age.

- Among the other programs Helen uses in addition to the brain activities are: "Thinking Skills," an activity which involves tracking the way information is absorbed, understood and used.

Quite often," Helen said, "just by changing the way a person reacts to and uses new



*Nicole Cox does
Cross Crawl*

information will make a dramatic difference in attitude and learning achievement.”

- “Movement re-education,” a program that was designed to change habits of conscious coordination of reflexes or automatic response to certain stimuli. Through balancing the hemispheres of the brain and muscle groupings in the body, a new habit of reflex control can be established, Helen said.

“In this manner, body coordination is reinforced,” she added.

- “Mind Wise,” a program in which Helen attempts to give a personalized approach to achieve relaxation and removed stress. In the activity Helen used the modalities of polarity, guided imagery and Edu-Kinesthetics.
- Attitude Wise,” an activity through which Helen tries to create positive attitudes and thought patterns by learning of life’s opportunities and lessons. She emphasizes journal writing and goal planning to achieve those goals.

Helen said all programs are designed as learning opportunities.

“There are no failures here; mistakes are learning opportunities,” she said that then she proceeded to her second floor gym to teach students more of the Brain Gym® exercises needed to get them “switched on.”