



OPTIONS CENTER EDUCATION TOPIC



What does exercise have to do with learning?

- Written by Amy Fasig

"Movement is the Door to Learning"-- Paul Dennison, Ph.D.

Educational Kinesiology was developed by Dr. Paul Dennison over twenty years ago when he was in California working with children who had special needs. After seeing the dramatic results the simple exercises of Brain Gym® had on these children, he went on to discover why people have learning difficulties, what types of blocks inhibit specific types of learning, and his brain dominance theories. From his research, Dr. Dennison saw that physical movement is extremely important to the learning process. The exercises in Brain Gym®, which resemble mild calisthenics, exercise parts of the body in order to stimulate parts of the brain that are not working properly and/or are not connected to other parts of the brain. Dr. Dennison found that the Brain Gym® exercises help to integrate the right and left hemispheres of the brain and, when integrated, the innate learning abilities of the student can be drawn upon.

The movements also reduce any stress involved in learning which helps the student assimilate new information without such blocks as test anxiety or becoming hyperactive. When the connections are integrated in the brain and the body, the student's academic performance improves because their self-esteem and self-responsibility increase, the ability to concentrate becomes easier, and their organizational skills are enhanced. Other benefits of Brain Gym® are: that behavior and/or attitude problems are reduced or eliminated; hand-eye coordination increases; and learning becomes easier, more stress-free and, therefore, more fun. As Sister Mary Ann Schmitz, former Principal of St. Patrick's School in Washington, IL says of Brain Gym®, "It benefits all, labels no one, and is enjoyable to all. Students begin to enhance brain activity." When the whole-brain

is integrated, the student's reading, writing, and communication improve as well as their memory and mathematical abilities. The mind and the body can then work together with ease so that the student can reach his or her maximum potential.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

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