



## THE EDU-K UPDATE

OCTOBER 2008

Dear Students and Professional Members,

Recently, I wrote a letter to our instructors that I think is relevant for this audience as well:

Many with whom I speak are experiencing higher levels of stress than usual. Turn on the TV or read the news and it's easy to find good reasons for the reported tension, headaches and sore muscles. People are using phrases such as "What's going to happen?", "I'm afraid", and "I'm worried". While pondering all of this, the following cornerstones of Edu-k and the Brain Gym® work came to mind:

### **Drawing out:**

It's important to meet people where they are, allow them to move forward at their own PACE, and reassure them that where they are is precisely the perfect place for them to be. You may be doing this wonderfully with others. *Are you also modeling this by treating yourself with the same grace and respect?*

### **Noticing:**

One of the best ways to determine where we are is to pause and identify the experience. Is there tension? If so, where? What thoughts are coming through? What is the emotional climate? Is there safety? How's focus and comprehension? Are the details and big picture accessible? What kind of posture is being experienced? *Is there a different experience that is preferred and if so, what could be done to move closer to it?*

### **Movement:**

Ahhh.....movement. So many options. *Need I say more?*

### **Play:**

Play has many definitions. What is considered play for one may not be play for another. I find play to be activities that engage me such that I stay in the moment. It generally encourages a smile, laughter, or a simple sense of peace. And it liberates me from external stressors, giving me the opportunity to rejuvenate. *Is there something that you could do that simply feels good and lets you enjoy the moment that is passing right now?*

May each of you find your way to peace, laughter, and movement! Have a wonderful month.

## Edu-K Tips and Tools:

by Deborah Scott Studebaker

### PACE, Part 2

Last month we spoke about the final step in the PACE process: Hookups. Before we move on, let's take a closer look at Step One of PACE, Sipping Water. Here's a charming technique that I have found to be quite magical for children in the classroom, at home and during a balance.

Several years ago I was reviewing Brain Gym 101 with Domenic Alessio and Denise Hornbeak in the San Diego area. In the class was a woman (I wish I knew her name!) who shared her special tip for having fun with this activity. She would bring in a pitcher, tray and little cups to serve her children water, calling it "Brain Juice."

I have taken this practice a bit further in my own work and frequently invite one child to make a toast to some aspect of the day's lesson or goal. We "clink" our paper cups and it becomes an enjoyable celebration for us all. I have older students who now stop me in the halls to remember drinking our "Brain Juice" in class together. It's a memorable way for everyone to get the benefits of hydration!

Next month we'll continue our slowed-down look at the balance process as we focus on goal-setting. How do you approach this with your clients, especially if they don't walk in with a clear intention? How do you set goals with young children? Email your thoughts on these queries or send questions of your own to [info@braingym.org](mailto:info@braingym.org). Just reference "Tips and Tools" in the subject line. We view this column as a resource for

Kind Wishes,  
Kari Coady  
Executive Director

We view this column as a resource for instructors as well as students, and we always look forward to hearing from you!

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### 2009 BRAIN GYM® DAYS

#### **Australia**

January 10-18, 2009, in Melbourne, Victoria, Australia:  
Summer School: "Expand Your Horizons"  
Contact: Robyn Hampton,  
[robynhampton@optusnet.com.au](mailto:robynhampton@optusnet.com.au)  
[www.braingym.org.au](http://www.braingym.org.au)

### 2009 BRAIN GYM® INTERNATIONAL ANNUAL CONFERENCE

#### **Germany**

April 16th-19th, 2009  
"Movement, Brain and Learning"  
Kirchzarten, near Freiburg, Southern Germany  
**To register:** [click here.](#)

## Spotlight On: *Deep Understanding Balance (230 DUB)*

In this course, authored by licensed Brain Gym® Instructor, Chet Wolfson, Ph.D students learn a method to perceive, imagine, and logically explain solutions that are effective in achieving their goals. Based on an integration of Jean Piaget's model of intelligence and the Dennisons' Brain Gym, four balances are taught to address physical, conceptual, emotional and social understanding goals. Participants experience the joy and wonder in discovering a deeper understanding of themselves and the world around them. Open to students who have taken Brain Gym

## Featured Faculty Member

Don Wetsel, MA, LAc, NCBTMB

Don Wetsel, MA, LAc, NCBTMB is a Brain Gym® Instructor and member of the Educational Kinesiology International Faculty. His lifelong study of human growth and potential, along with his personal journey of recovery and wellness, led him from his head to his heart and from theoretical to experiential and functional models. After studying Brain Gym and noticing the positive changes he made in his life, he sought to understand how simple body-based activities create transformational effects on health, learning and the achievement of goals. This quest provided the motivation to become not only an expert in Educational Kinesiology, but also a nationally certified bodywork practitioner and a licensed acupuncturist. His extensive training and experience in functional aspects of both biomedical and energetic anatomy and physiology allow him to embody these concepts and effectively teach them to others. He becomes especially passionate when these concepts become creative and transformational in the Educational Kinesiology 5 step balance process.



Don teaches Brain Gym®, Visioncircles®, Optimal Brain Organization, Educational Kinesiology In-Depth, Movement Re-education, and Creative Vision as well as Touch for Health®. He has

been a pioneer in implementing movement based whole brain and body integration programs into our school systems. He supports individuals and groups of all ages in reducing stress, discovering the joy of learning and moving, improving their health, and achieving their academic, artistic, professional, and life goals. He

world around them. Open to students who have taken Brain Gym 101. For a list of upcoming courses, [click here](#).

## A Look at Edu-K History

by Paul E. Dennison, Ph.D

Instructors often ask me about my experiences using movement at my learning centers prior to developing the Brain Gym program. In 1969 I had completed five years of teaching at different grade levels in the public schools, yet I often felt discouraged by my inability to give individual attention to students in the classroom. I established my first learning center, The Valley Remedial Group, in Studio City, California. There I adapted the novel, integrative approach of Dr. Constance Amsden from the Malabar Street School Reading Project in East Los Angeles, where I had taught children from the barrio.

In 1971 I began checking eye dominance with students, using an extensive four-hour test to determine dominance profiles and learning-style preferences. Being familiar with the work of Arnold Gesell, a development optometrist and head of the Gesell Institute of Child Development, I began adding ocular motility and manipulation activities that seemed to provide alternatives to the traditional teaching of reading. I also began sharing offices with developmental optometrists, and was invited to attend in-service trainings where bilateral movement was part of the training program. In 1972 I had the good fortune to work with Dr. Louis Jacque, a leading pioneer in vision training, who taught me the importance of eye pointing and visual recovery.

I was invited to share an office with Dr. Samuel Herr, O.D., and his wife, Margaret, who were both associated with the Optometric Extension Program. As I shared clients with the Herrs, my staff and I had daily observation and in-service vision training with experts in the field of behavioral optometry. I soon began adapting such movements in my private tutoring of students as well as in the classroom. I continued to develop and simplify these few activities over the next fifteen years, gathering the material that would eventually be the core of the Brain Gym system.

As director of the learning centers, I worked with my staff to find solutions for the moderate to severe challenges experienced by the school-age and adult learners who came for private sessions. In 1973 I read *How to Develop Your Child's Intelligence* by the optometrist Dr. G.N. Getman. I began using Getman's bilateral drawing—with remarkable success. I found that, just as he described in his book, students at my learning center made rapid improvements in math, reading, and even writing after doing the two-handed drawing. Many years later, Gail and I would adapt the structured rules of the bilateral drawing to create the freeform Double Doodle activity.

I found that students of all ages were happiest and most successful when, before doing academic work, they first mastered certain physical skills such as tracking of the eyes across the horizontal midline. These are the physical skills of learning that cannot be taught to learners directly. These include many visual, auditory, fine-motor, and postural skills that people seem to learn automatically as infants or not at all, and that have been an enigma to most educators. I discovered that when I taught my students to do task-specific, learning-readiness movements (later to become the Brain Gym activities), students often immediately integrated these physical, preparatory skills of learning and made

integrates self-responsibility models of health, learning and transformation with many different healing techniques. He creates a safe, nurturing space so one can discover and organize inner resources to make positive change.

Don is the author of *The Foundations of Acupuncture in Traditional Chinese Medicine*. He and his wife Susanna Wetsel, DC, DABCN maintain private practices in Fairfield, Virginia and will open an office in Staunton, Virginia in fall 2008.

## A Research Question

Is the foundation's research on Brain Gym scientific?

Some academics consider only experimental research (statistical research with control groups) to be scientific. You'll find the studies that most adhere to this standard in our Annotated Research subcategories "Quasi-Experimental Research" and "True Experimental Research". Two have been published in a peer-reviewed journal; G.C.K. Khalsa's, Don Morris's, and Josie M. Siift, Ph.D.'s study on static balance, 1990) "The effects of Educational Kinesiology on the static balance of learning-disabled students", and Josie M. Siift, Ph.D.'s and G.C.K. Khalsa's study "The effect of Educational Kinesiology upon simple response times and choice response times". Other academics consider descriptive research to be of equal scientific value to experimental research, because it identifies trends and provides a sound basis for controlled experimental research. You'll find many examples of such pilot studies that use qualitative or anecdotal research. These latter studies have not yet been peer-reviewed, although some of them are qualified for such review. (Both qualitative and quantitative studies are acceptable for peer review.)

## New Professional Members!

academic leaps on their own.

In 1975, while majoring in Curriculum Development at the University of Southern California, with a minor in Experimental Psychology, I developed a research study for my doctoral dissertation on the relationship of covert speech (silent thinking skills) to the acquisition of beginning reading skills. Working with the first-grade beginning readers in my study, I realized the impact of the neurological development of auditory, visual, and kinesthetic abilities on academic achievement. That year I was awarded my doctorate and also received the Phi Delta Kappa award for outstanding research.

In 1976 I began a personal self-improvement program, including body therapies, movement training, and long distance running. I began working with sports Kinesiologist Bud Gibbs and dancer/movement therapist Michael Nebadon (creator of Center of the Form). My own gentle movement of reeducation used in the Educational Kinesiology in Depth and Movement Reeducation courses later evolved from my experience working with these body workers and movement educators. In 1978 I began collaborating with Richard Tyler, D.C., to introduce Applied Kinesiology concepts to students at my centers, as part of a longitudinal study to see how movement interventions affect learning (see *Switching On: The Holistic Answer to Dyslexia*).

In 1979 I took the Touch for Health course and began to search for a way to maximize the effectiveness of the Cross Crawl. I began to use muscle checking as a teaching and anchoring tool. In 1981 I wrote my first book, *Switching On: The Holistic Answer to Dyslexia*. The eager reception of my book by adults with learning disabilities had a profound impact on me. I changed my focus to education of the adult population, believing that this would, in turn, reach children at risk.

As my learning centers grew during the next few years, I worked with hundreds of clients to explore the impact of these activities on the development of eye tracking, head turning, and other physical skills, as well as on the acquisition of reading, writing, spelling, and math abilities. Inspired by Noel Kephart, Ray Barsch, G. N. Getman, and other movement educators of the time, and by the small miracles I saw happening with students using movement at my reading centers, I began to incorporate developmental movement with the first-graders in my classroom in East Los Angeles. Long before it became known that intentional movement builds new neural pathways, I was doing empirical research that demonstrated the Brain Gym activities' enhancement of learning.

In 1981 I taught my first basic workshop to seventeen people. That year I presented my work at the Touch for Health annual meeting, and received tremendous support for my novel application of muscle checking and other innovations. In 1982 I originated Dennison Laterality Repatterning, and began lecturing and teaching basic workshops across the United States while concurrently developing the Edu-K in-Depth process.

Read about Paul's recent adventures in this issue's "A Brain Gym Story."

## Ask Dave

Dave administers and answers questions posted to our [website](#) message board, "Ask Dave". To visit or post a question [click here](#)

CONGRATULATIONS to our **NEW** Professional Members!

### **CANADA**

Janet Clancy .....Montreal, QC  
Maryse Michaud ....Saint Lenard, NB  
Mary Ann Swan .....Markham, ON

### **MALAYSIA**

Kelvin Tham  
Chee Nang .....Kuala Lumpur

### **TAIWAN**

Roger Snively .....Taipei

### **USA**

Anna Nameny .....Elk River, MN  
Sonya White .....San Francisco, CA

## A Brain Gym Story

Paul Dennison, Founder, shares his recent experiences:

In August I traveled for the first time to Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia. I began my trip in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in a course sponsored by the Malaysia Brain Gym Association. In this small Practicum Update, ten enthusiastic Brain Gym® Instructors shared their experiences with the work in classrooms and private sessions and enjoyed learning from the new Brain Gym® 101 handbook. The next day, with support from the instructors in the community, I gave a presentation to more than one hundred sixty people.

I next taught the Whole-Brain Learning course to sixty students in Singapore, some of whom were new to the Brain Gym work. Following the two-day course, provided a Practicum update to

HERE.

**Question:**

I would like to know which hemisphere is activated when you look up to the left and if that has anything to do with the alphabet 8's. Does a letter written on the left belong to the opposite hemisphere?

**Dave's Answer:**

The Dennisons suggest starting the Lazy 8s by going up to the left first in order to help in bringing the right hemisphere to greater participation in reading activities. There is some theory and some evidence that looking to the left stimulates the right hemisphere. I would not say that a letter written on the left belongs to the opposite hemisphere. The brain operates in a more whole manner than that. The left hemisphere is where the language center exists to initiate language activities, however there is mounting scientific evidence that it takes the whole brain to do language, and everything else. Many believe this is why integrating the whole brain more fully, reducing stress to participation of all parts simultaneously, helps.

thirty graduates and instructors from Singapore, Malaysia, Australia, and the Philippines.

As the month progressed, I traveled to Indonesia, where Elisabeth Demuth and Ruslan Morris sponsored an exciting Practicum update for more than sixty instructors. The next day I had the honor to be the featured speaker at a Brain Gym conference attended by some two hundred seventy Brain Gym students, instructors, and people new to the work and curious about it. Wherever I traveled, I was gratified to feel the deep appreciation that people have for the Edu-K work.

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**Order our PACE Cd!**

Learn about the wonderful Brain Gym process, PACE, by Carla Hannaford, Ph.D. Carla, who teaches *Physiological Basis of Edu-K (103 PBE)*, shares her expertise from her perspective as a neuro-physiologist.  
Cost: \$10 + shipping and handling  
email: [info@braingym.org](mailto:info@braingym.org)