Brain Gym® Exercises

Author: Kenneth Beare

These simple exercises are based on the copyrighted work of Paul E. Dennison, Ph.D., and Gail E. Dennison. Brain Gym is a registered trademark of Brain Gym® International. I first encountered Brain Gym in "Smart Moves," a best selling book written by Carla Hannaford, Ph.D. Dr. Hannaford states that our bodies are very much a part of all our learning, and learning is not an isolated "brain" function. Every nerve and cell is a network contributing to our intelligence and our learning capability. Many educators have found this work quite helpful in improving overall concentration in class. Introduced here, you will find four basic "Brain Gym" exercises which implement the ideas developed in "Smart Moves" and can be used quickly in any classroom. Below is a series of movements called PACE. They are surprisingly simple, but very effective! Everyone has a unique PACE and these activities will help both teacher and student become positive, active, clear and energetic for learning. For colorful, fun PACE and Brain Gym® supplies contact the Edu-Kinesthetics on-line bookstore at Braingym.com.

• Drink Water

As Carla Hannaford says, "Water comprises more of the brain (with estimates of 90%) than of any other organ of the body." Having students drink some water before and during class can help "grease the wheel". Drinking water is very important before any stressful situation - tests! - as we tend to perspire under stress, and de-hydration can effect our concentration negatively.

• "Brain Buttons"

This exercise helps improve blood flow to the brain to "switch on" the entire brain before a lesson begins. The increased blood flow helps improve concentration skills required for reading, writing, etc.

Put one hand so that there is as wide a space as possible between the thumb and index finger.

Disclaimer: The research materials are collated from web based resources.
Place your index and thumb into the slight indentations below the collar bone on each side of the sternum. Press lightly in a pulsing manner.

At the same time put the other hand over the navel area of the stomach. Gently press on these points for about 2 minutes.

•  "Cross Crawl"

This exercise helps coordinate right and left brain by exercising the information flow between the two hemispheres. It is useful for spelling, writing, listening, reading and comprehension.

Stand or sit. Put the right hand across the body to the left knee as you raise it, and then do the same thing for the left hand on the right knee just as if you were marching.

Just do this either sitting or standing for about 2 minutes.

•  "Hook Ups"

This works well for nerves before a test or special event such as making a speech. Any situation which will cause nervousness calls for a few "hook ups" to calm the mind and improve concentration.

Stand or sit. Cross the right leg over the left at the ankles.

Take your right wrist and cross it over the left wrist and link up the fingers so that the right wrist is on top.

Bend the elbows out and gently turn the fingers in towards the body until they rest on the sternum (breast bone) in the center of the chest. Stay in this position.

Keep the ankles crossed and the wrists crossed and then breathe evenly in this position for a few minutes. You will be noticeably calmer after that time.

More "Whole Brain" Techniques and Activities

Have you had any experience using "whole brain", NLP, Suggestopedia, Mind Maps or the like? Would you like to know more? Join the discussion in the forum.

Using Music in the Classroom
Six years ago researchers reported that people scored better on a standard IQ test after listening to Mozart. You would be surprised at how much music can also help English learners.

The Brain: An overview
A visual explanation of the different parts of the brain, how they work and an example ESL EFL exercise employing the specific area.

Using Colored Pens
The use of colored pens to help the right brain remember patterns. Each time you use the pen it reinforces the learning process.

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Helpful Drawing Hints
"A picture paints a thousand words" - Easy techniques to make quick sketches that will help any artistically challenged teacher - like myself! - use drawings on the board to encourage and stimulate class discussions.

Suggestopedia: Lesson Plan
Introduction and lesson plan to a "concert" using the suggestopedia approach to effective/affective learning.

Learning Theory, Styles
About Guide Kimeiko Hotta Dover provides this wonderful resource to information concerning: brain and intelligence, multiple intelligence theory and applications, learning styles, adult learning theory and more.

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