



Brain Gym®
Much More Than Movements
As synthesized by Thomas W. Washburn

When I began my Brain Gym journey, it was with the understanding that Brain Gym was a series of quick fun, and energizing physical movements that had a direct impact on the functioning of the brain and the learning that took place there. While this is certainly true, I have learned in Brain Gym 101 these movements are only *some* of the small details of the big picture of Brain Gym. It is the goals, balances, repatterning and anchoring opportunities which involve these small details or movements along with the dimensions of learning, that form the big Brain Gym picture.

In Brain Gym, there are basically two kinds of *goals or intentions*. Action Goals involve the sensory, emotive or kinesthetic aspects of a physical skill and are useful with anyone who is “trying too hard” to achieve a goal. Verbal Goals involve the language necessary to clarify a goal.

The *balances* in Brain Gym are processes designed to enhance one’s ability to move from Stress-Based learning where content and context are unrelated (an unintegrated state) to Movement-Based Learning where content relates to context (an integrated state). In an unintegrated state the learner can be unable to sustain attention, is compulsive, perfectionist, depressed and/or frustrated. Using Brain Gym to move to the integrated state, the learner operates from a familiar context, the big picture, is able to think before responding and is comfortable with the details. When imbalance exists, there is an inability to move between these two states.

The *brain repatterning sequences* of Brain Gym encourage the learner to replace old ineffective neural networks with newer more efficient neural pathways. Thus, allowing old patterns of behavior to be replaced by newer more effective patterns of behavior.

The *anchors* in Brain Gym allow for connections to exist between the mental, physical and emotional aspects of learning by associating specific new learning with kinesthetic (muscles and movement) experience.

The *dimensions* in Brain Gym allow us to acknowledge and educate the whole brain in active, motivating and fun ways. The Communication Dimension is about information processing. The Focus Dimension is about spatial awareness and ability to comprehend what is being learned. The Centering Dimension involves the learner’s feelings and sense of connectedness with the outer world. When these three dimensions are in balance and working together, the whole brain is able to communicate, organize and comprehend with greater ease. However, when one or more of these dimensions are in conflict with another, the learning process is impaired or interrupted.

While the Brain Gym movement activities do have a direct impact on the functioning of the brain and the learning that occurs there, it is the goals, balances, brain repatterning sequences and anchoring (the deeper Brain Gym processes) which these movements make possible that allow for the three dimensions of learning to be integrated and the whole brain learning of Brain Gym to occur.

****The author of this article completed Brain Gym 101, facilitated by Cristina Whitehawk, Licensed Brain Gym Instructor in 2007. He teaches kindergarten in the Mesa School District, Mesa, AZ.***



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