

# Brain Gym® -- for a 'Brand New Brain!'

*A Tale of an 'English Language Learner'*

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Amanda is a sweet, intelligent young girl, and she was about to be retained in third grade. She had come to this country speaking only Spanish, and had learned English over the last two years. By now she was fairly fluent in English, but somehow, she could not read easily in either Spanish or English, and the director described her as being "language-confused."

This was the story of the first child I was to work with at a recent visit to a local school where I offer Brain Gym® services. All the teachers at this school have had the Brain Gym Course and do Brain Gym movements at the beginning of each class. I go to this school one day each month for a "residency day," to work one-on-one with students the director has identified as needing special help.

**Amanda arrived** for her Brain Gym session and we chatted a bit, and I went on to ask her what area she'd like to improve in. We talked about her learning of English, and she told me how difficult it had been to come to school that first day knowing only three words of English, and how hard it had been to learn. She showed me a book she had with her, and said she wished she could read more easily. She read one paragraph out loud -- awkwardly, straining to recognize certain words, and stumbling over punctuation.

Somehow, the goals, "I know where to go in my brain for the Spanish," and "I know where to go in my brain for the English" popped into my head. I asked her if this was what she wanted, and her whole face lit up. "YES!" she said. I told her that her two languages might be stored in her brain in ways that made them hard to get to, and that a Brain Gym balance might help her go more directly to the language she wanted. She was thrilled with that idea.

**Amanda's balance** called for Dennison Laterality Repatterning. This made a huge shift in her Cross Crawl (very awkward before, and now very smooth). Her reading sample didn't seem much different to me, but Amanda said that reading was indeed a "whole lot easier." Amanda returned to her classroom, delighted --

and I wondered just what change had occurred, and how it would unfold.

Two weeks later one of the teachers at the school asked, "Did you work with Amanda Perez on your last residency day?" It turned out that Amanda's mother was a close friend of hers, and had quite a story to tell. Amanda had come home from school and said to her mother, "You're not going to have to follow me around and make me do my homework anymore! I have a brand new brain!"

**And indeed, overnight,** homework had gone from a battle to something that Amanda did on

her own, easily, every day. Not only that, both her ease in expressing herself in English, and her ability to write in either language blossomed overnight; and a recent check of her reading skill showed that in two weeks she had gone from reading at grade level 2.3 to 3.0! Amazing, what a "brand new brain" will do!

## Six month update

The balance described in the original article above took place late in the third quarter of the academic year. At that time the school expected to have Amanda repeat third grade, as she was having such a challenge in showing competency in core areas of the curriculum. Up to that point she had earned almost all D's and F's, mostly due to incomplete work.

Her report card of the fourth quarter, following her Brain Gym balance, was almost all A's and B's! Needless to say, everyone was delighted, and this year Amanda is working beautifully in fourth grade.

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