

Putting on Our Thinking Caps

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Abstract: This article is about utilizing acupressure and movement techniques to improve learning and athletic performance. I will explain basic Kinesiology for Learning theories, share personal results of working with these

methods, and demonstrate techniques. The main focus of the demonstrations is Dennison Laterality Repatterning for vision and movement, and balancing for a goal.

Lets put on our thinking caps. Do this by unrolling the cartilage starting at the top of your ears, and going down to your ear lobes. There now, isn't that better? This technique improves auditory comprehension. In my younger years this was not a problem for me. However, as I am maturing, I sometimes find that I am hearing words, but not comprehending their meaning. After I do this technique, I am able to better comprehend. Many times, children with learning disabilities have this auditory problem, because they cannot block out all the stimuli, and they short circuit. They then become rowdy because they cannot comprehend what is being said to them. Doing this technique tunes them in to what you are saying. Their behavior becomes more appropriate, and they are more easily able to focus on the task a hand.

You already know and are using some of the Kinesiology for Learning methods because they have been incorporated into Touch for Health as Super Learning techniques to improve learning and retention of information. They are the three prechecks (switching, Central Meridian Zip-

Ups, and the Dehydration Check), balancing eyes and ears, cross crawl, and ESR points.

I have been teaching Kinesiology for Learning for the last 19 years to teachers, students, and parents. These techniques are helpful for anyone because they help to improve learning, whether a person has learning disabilities or is working on a PhD. Athletes can utilize these techniques to improve whole body and hand/eye coordination. A high school basketball player came to me with the desire to improve his shooting percentage. He was missing baskets because he was trying too hard from a left brain perspective and missing the right brain rhythm and flow. The techniques allowed him to integrate right/left brain. He said, "I don't care what the students think. I'm using these techniques because they work." He ended up with a basketball scholarship to college where he set records, and is now playing on the team opposite the Harlem Globe Trotters. I worked with a 6 year old Asperger's Syndrome client, to help him to concentrate, and eventually to read. Another client I worked with was a 5 year old, blind boy with cerebral palsy. After balancing him for vision and movement, he went to Physical Therapy, where for the first time, he reached for the rope when he was put on the swing. The balancing helped him with his proprioception, knowing where his body was in space, even though he couldn't see.

This is what Kinesiology for Learning is all about. It is acupressure and movement techniques that reset circuits to integrate right/left brain and improve learning. The benefits are improved comprehension, concentration, coordination, confidence and calmness. Phillip Crockford developed Kinesiology for Learning

in 1987, using portions of Paul Dennison's Educational Kinesiology model. The following information is taken from his workbook.

Basic Theories

Right/Left Brain Integration

For any learning to take place, the right and left hemispheres need to be working together in an integrated way. According to the Neuropsychology model of the brain's processing in Philip Crockford's "Kinesiology for Learning" workbook, the left brain is focal, analytical, and serial. It is the "try brain", where language takes place. It is under conscious control. The right brain is diffuse, holistic and simultaneous in its processing. It is the "reflex" brain, where automatic reactions take place. It is unconscious and receptive, and into the rhythm and flow.

When you experience difficulty with learning, the two halves of the brain aren't working together in an integrated way. There is either too much try brain, with not enough ability to process the whole picture and relax into learning, or too much reflex brain, with not enough ability to concentrate and process logically. Parallel processing is a stressful compensation in which the person switches back and forth from left to right. This is an exhausting process, and may account for people falling asleep while reading.

Stress Management Model

Various kinds of stress on the body-mind will interfere with brain integration, and thus learning. As stress goes up, integration goes out. This happens to everyone to a certain extent, but with children who have learning disabilities this is very apparent. They are not able to block out external stimuli, and can more easily become stressed, thus affecting their ability to concentrate, and comprehend.

Dennison Laterality Repatterning

When you first learn something, like doing a dance step, the left brain is active, as you focus a lot of attention on a small area of activity, and break down the pieces. However, as you learn the step, the right brain takes over and the steps become automatic. In certain instances,

the left brain doesn't let go of control, and you continue to put a lot of effort into accomplishing the task. Dennison Laterality Repatterning improves the connections across the midline of the brain to increase brain integration. This allows the left brain to let go of control, and the right brain to get into the rhythm and flow of the activity. You can feel this happen when you start to move effortlessly through the motions.

There are three phases to Dennison Laterality Repatterning; testing, repatterning and integration. In the testing phase, you test to see if the body is functioning in the homolateral (one-sided) or bilateral (integrated) mode for movement and vision. In the homolateral state you are using only one side of the brain or body and are unable to access both hemispheres simultaneously. This blocks integrated thinking and movement. In the bilateral state you can access the full resources of both hemispheres.

In the bilateral state you will switch on for cross crawl and off for homolateral crawl. In the parallel processing state, you will switch on for both cross crawl and homolateral crawl. When you switch off for cross crawl and on for homolateral crawl, your body prefers homolateral movement and is switched off by using both hemispheres together for movement. When you switch off for both cross crawl and homolateral crawl, your body is disorganized and switched off by any kind of movement.

The interpretation of the visual field test is similar; you are testing integration in a different area of the brain and the same principles apply. For example, in the bilateral state you will switch on for looking at an X and off for looking at parallel lines (II).

The purpose of this testing is to make you, your brain and your nervous system aware of the homolateral state. This indicates the area needing help, so that the corrective information that comes next will go where it is most useful.

In the repatterning phase, you first ask the body's permission by saying, "I am (or this person's body is) ready for repatterning", and muscle test. Next, to determine which eye mode causes a switched on response, look up to

the right (with eyes only, without moving the head) and muscle test, then look up to the left and muscle test. The eye mode that resulted in the switched on response will be the eye mode that activates the reflex brain for this person. The activation of the reflex brain allows you to cross the midline easily and naturally, without the need for conscious control.

Now do cross crawl with your eyes in the appropriate eye mode to activate the reflex brain, and anchor the result with a switched on muscle test. Next, do homolateral crawl with your eyes turned down in the opposite direction, to activate the try brain, and anchor the results with a muscle test. Your muscle will be switched off by this activity, signifying that the try brain can let go of its need for total control; it can relax to allow the reflex brain to work for movement.

The integration phase completes the procedure by using an integration metaphor and then retesting to be sure that the simultaneous activation of both hemispheres has taken place. This retesting verifies and anchors the result of the integration.

The integration metaphor brings the two hemispheres together and anchors the result with vision, touch, and movement (including proprioception or internal awareness of body position). Through the integration metaphor you do a symbolic moving, touching, seeing integration, by spreading your arms wide apart. Imagine that half of your brain is in each hand, and then slowly bring the hands together at eye level to clasp the fingers together with the thumbs crossed. You will enhance the effectiveness of this step by breathing smoothly, relaxing and at the same time allowing yourself to feel the two brains working together.

If you want to effectively give the brain important new information, it is best to

communicate through the systems the brain understands best. Vision, touch and movement are the communication systems the brain understands best, and by which a baby learns about its environment from the time it is born.

Next, cross crawl, and as you do so, look in all different directions. These eye movements activate several different parts of the brain. Anchor this with a switched on muscle test. Now do homolateral crawl with eyes moving in all directions. Anchor this is with a switched off muscle test. Look at an X and anchor this with a switched on muscle test. Then look at the parallel lines(II),and anchor this with a switched off muscle test. These two tests indicate integration at the level of the visual field.

After repatterning, the brain has learned to use the reflex brain for crossing the midline. Now, any exercise which follows this pattern will be beneficial because it will enable the brain to reinforce its newly effective mode. Looking at an X will also have a reinforcing effect.

Just as in Touch for Health, you can do a basic balancing of the energy or you can balance for a goal, in Dennison Laterality Repatterning, you can do a balance for movement and vision, or you can balance for a goal. Personally, I have found Dennison's balancing for a goal to be very powerful, both for myself and for my clients. One example was when I worked with a psychiatric nursing student who was unable to talk over the loud speaker. The day following balancing her for this goal, she walked up to the loud speaker and announced exercise class for the patients, in such a melodious relaxed voice that I didn't recognize that it was her. A checklist to assist you in using Dennison Laterality Repatterning for a goal follows.

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DENNISON LATERALITY REPATTERNING FOR A GOAL: WORKSHEET

	MUSCLE TEST	RESULTS
01. MUSCLE TEST IN THE CLEAR	ON*	OFF
02. READ YOUR GOAL AND MUSCLE TEST	ON*	OFF
03. SAY "I AM EASILY ABLE TO (GOAL): MUSCLE TEST	ON	OFF*
04. VISUALIZE ACCOMPLISHING GOAL: MUSCLE TEST	ON	OFF*
05. SAY "I'M READY TO ACCEPT REPATTERNING FOR THIS GOAL: MUSCLE TEST	ON*	OFF
06. CROSS CRAWL WITH EYES UP TO RT/LT: M.T.	ON*	OFF
07. HOMOLATERAL CRAWL WITH EYES DOWN TO RT/LT: MUSCLE TEST	ON	OFF*
08. INTEGRATION METAPHOR(MOVING/TOUCHING/SEEING)	NO MT	
09. CROSS CRAWL WITH EYES IN ALL DIRECTIONS:M.T.	ON*	OFF
10. HOMOLATERAL CRAWL WITH EYES IN ALL DIRECTIONS: MUSCLE TEST	ON	OFF*
11. LOOK AT II AND MUSCLE TEST	ON	OFF*
12. LOOK AT X AND MUSCLE TEST	ON*	OFF
13. READ YOUR GOAL AND MUSCLE TEST	ON*	OFF
14. SAY "I AM EASILY ABLE TO (GOAL): MUSCLE TEST	ON*	OFF
15.VISUALIZE ACCOMPLISHING GOAL: MUSCLE TEST	ON*	OFF

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