

# Using Kinesiology in Schools and Education Settings – My Story

By Claire Hocking, Australian Educational Kinesiologist and Brain Gym Instructor ©2025

“I wish I could find something to switch on your brain so you could easily understand this information”, I said to myself as I did my best to help a child in my primary school class that had been struggling with their schoolwork. My heart would go out to those students who tried so hard, yet still struggled with their schoolwork, despite all the efforts by the child, parents and teachers. “It’s in their brain”, I thought, “I just need to switch it on somehow”.

My teaching years went by, often still confronting the same dilemma despite all my best efforts. Then one day over the summer school holidays, my eldest daughter and her friend wanted to do a course on self-esteem. The parents were invited later in the day to hear all that our children had been learning. Part of the session was learning about special movements they had been taught called Brain Gym, that were designed to switch-on their brain to improve learning and concentration. I thought they were weird when they demonstrated them to us and was very skeptical as I had never heard of anything like that before in my teaching career.

Then I discovered on my first school day of that year that I was having a full-time cerebral palsy boy, Simon, in my year 5 class. This was a time in Australia that schools began moving special needs students from special schools into mainstream schools. I (and other mainstream teachers) had had little experience with ‘real’ special needs at that time. When I asked the special needs teacher at my school to tell me about cerebral palsy, I was dismayed to be told that he ‘had very little memory and learning ability and was never expected to get out of his wheelchair’. I really paid attention when she added ‘that typical of cerebral palsy, he had very little connections between left and right sides of the brain’.

A Brain Gym movement I had been demonstrated in my daughter’s workshop was called Cross Crawl, and we were told it formed neural connections between left and right sides of the brain. Enthusiastically, I got my daughter to teach me all the Brain Gym she had been taught and got a copy of the sheet she had been given that listed the Brain Gym for reading, writing, spelling, and mathematics. I showed this and the Brain Gym movements to his aide the next morning; she looked at me as if I was mad. (I am used to that look now!). I did not even know if they would work if we did them for Simon, moving his opposite arm and leg for him, but we decided to give it a go. We would do many of the other Brain Gym movements with him over the day. It was about 2 weeks later that his aide told me Simon had finished his 5 addition sums for the day. Up until we started Brain Gym, we were lucky if he managed one sum per lesson and 30 seconds later, he would have forgotten the answer. So, I told the aide to go and go and do another sum with him. To my astonishment, she told me he had completed all the sums so told her to repeat them as he would have forgotten the answers by now. Again, to my bewilderment, she told me he knew the answers. I went over and asked him the answer to the sums. Not only had he remembered all the answers, but he also got them all correct. I now had the proof that this Brain Gym actually worked. We were all so thrilled when Simon began to really learn.

About 6 weeks after starting Brain Gym, Simon put his hand up to answer a question in class. This was the first time this had happened, so we were thrilled that he was actually listening now to

the class information, processing the information and forming an answer. His speech also gradually improved over time.

We also noticed he also began to sit more upright over time. I was not aware at this stage that Brain Gym also worked on physical coordination. After 6 months of doing Brain Gym each school day, Simon's coordination had improved so much that the physiotherapist decided we could teach him to walk with sticks, which Simon successfully did. By the end of the year, Simon was able to walk around the classroom holding onto furniture to get around without his sticks. We were all so thrilled and so was he!

Once I started seeing improvements in Simon, I turned my attention to 3 other boys in my year 5 class who struggled very much with their learning and behaviour. Their reading ages were all between 1–3-year levels so they were struggling with year 5 work. I decided to have them join Simon and do Brain Gym together throughout the day. Ten days later, one of these boys came up to me and said, "thank you Miss Hocking". Surprised, I asked what for? "I can think now", he said with a big smile on his face as he walked out to recess. I was astounded. In all the years of teaching, no student had ever made that sort of comment to me before. Other teachers began commenting to me on how they were also noticing improvements in these boys' attitudes, learning and behaviour. Interestingly, when I was chatting to his mother on the last day of the school year, she mentioned that he was on less than half the insulin rate (he was diabetic) that he was on at the beginning of the school year. It was only during my Brain Gym training that I discovered that Brain Gym also reduced stress so that natural healing could happen. I knew then there was really something special in these Brain Gym movements.

After a couple of months of introducing these movements, the rest of my class then asked if they could also do Brain Gym. So before doing reading, writing, spelling, and mathematics sessions, we would all do the sets of Brain Gym for those subjects. I was soon seeing a huge improvement in all my students' learning and attitudes, especially the children who had literacy and numeracy difficulties. Even the two gifted girls in my class reduced their stress levels and produced even more excellent work. I was amazed that doing such simple movements for a few minutes each day could have such a positive effect on their concentration, attitudes, learning and self esteem. My students would always want to do their Brain Gym, even doing it without me asking. All my students seemed more confident and independent in their outlook. We even started winning the tables championships and spelling bees against the other grade 5s on a Friday afternoon. "This is definitely what I have been looking for all these years to help my students to learn" I thought. As a bonus, I was given a promotion at the end of the year as the principal was so impressed with the results I had achieved that year.

The following year I was asked to teach music full-time at the school and decided to run a quiet experiment and wondered if anyone would notice anything. At the beginning of the school year, I incorporated the Brain Gym movements into my music lessons with the infant (foundation to year 2) classes who had several ADHD students. The infant classes had two 30-minute music sessions with me a week. I soon began to get some idea what each Brain Gym worked on. I always finished each music lesson with the students sitting in Hook-Ups to calm them down and help them focus for their next lesson.

I set up a quiet corner in my music room where any students could go and do the Hook-Ups if they needed some time out during the lesson. One day a year 2 ADHD boy came up to me and asked if he could go to the quiet corner. I said yes but asked why. He replied because he thought he was going to be 'naughty in a minute'. I am pleased to say that he happily rejoined the class after about 10 minutes of doing Hook-Ups and showed no signs of being naughty!

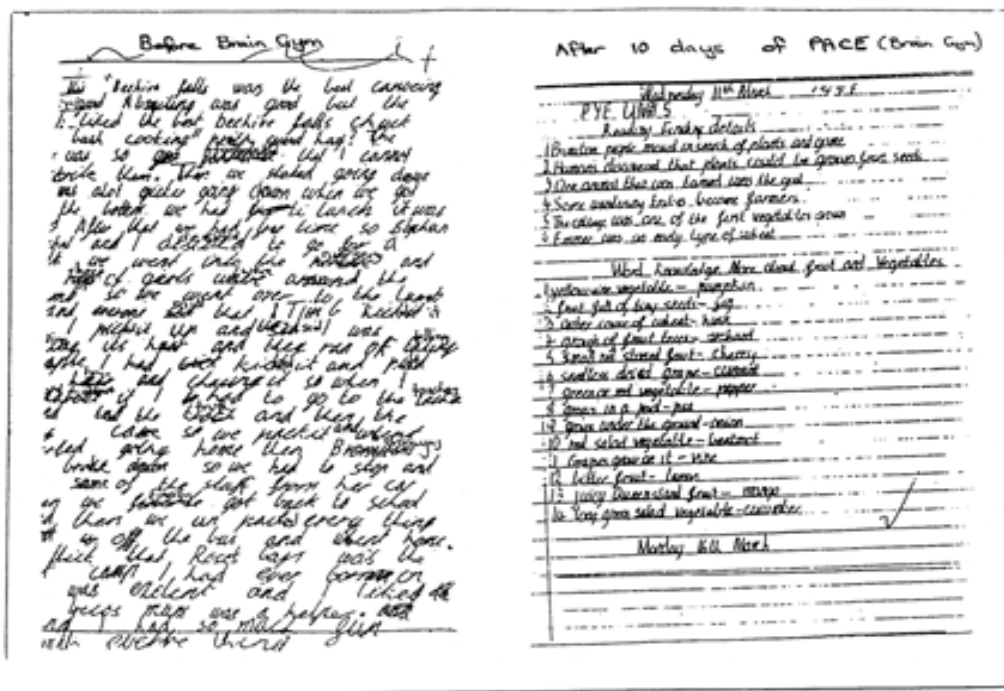
Our school year in Australia begins at the end of January. About May that year the infant teachers asked me to attend one of their infant meetings. At the meeting they asked me what I was doing in the music lessons. In response, I asked why they were asking that question. Apparently, after their music lessons, they noticed their students always walked back to class 'beautifully', then sat down and were very calm and focused. The infant teachers were beginning to schedule important teaching lessons straight after music as they had noticed this was a very 'teachable time' with their students so switched on. The infant teachers then followed up by telling me, when their students then went to their tables to do work, they were still so focused, they would work beautifully for the next 20-30 minutes without any interruptions; even the ADHD students were also doing this and they asked me again, what was I doing in music for this to happen? I was thrilled they had noticed something so positive, and confessed I was using Brain Gym in my music lessons. They wanted to know more, so I tried to sound intelligent pretending I knew all about Brain Gym. I also gave them a copy of the sheet I had on Brain Gym, and they then happily incorporated it into their daily routine.

I really wanted to know more about Brain Gym. I desperately tried to find books on Brain Gym to no avail and the internet did not exist at this time. Interestingly my personal life then took another unexpected turn which had a major effect on my teaching career. At this stage of my life, I had been divorced with 2 daughters for a number of years. A newly divorced teacher friend at my school had been nagging me to go to a singles dance with her and I had been resisting all year. She finally wore me down so I decided I would go to one and say that I would not want to go to another one again. Reluctantly, I attended and wanting to be polite, I introduced myself to the guy sitting opposite. He told me his name was Geoff and that he was a secondary school teacher. To my astonishment he then added he was also a Brain Gym instructor. I did not know they existed! Apparently, there were only about 35 instructors in Australia at that time, and I had accidentally found one sitting opposite me at a singles dance that I did not even want to attend! I was immediately interested in him and discovered there were Brain Gym books and courses that I could do. (As a follow up, we married the following year, and I had 2 more children. All my four children have done many Brain Gym courses, and our son is also an Educational Kinesiologist and Brain Gym instructor).

After I met Geoff, I was able to do the certified introductory 101 course in Brain Gym and went along to find out what it was really all about. I discovered that the Brain Gym movements were part of Educational Kinesiology, and operating in schools in over 160 countries around the world. The Brain Gym movements are able to bring about rapid and lasting changes in the brain in fundamental abilities, including focus, organisation, comprehension, physical coordination, social and communication skills, memory, and are suitable for all ages. The Brain Gym course answered so many of my questions and frustrations that I had felt as a teacher for all these years when dealing with students' difficulties in learning and behaviour. "At last, I have found the way to be able to switch on my students' brains" but I also felt annoyed that I had not been told of all this as

a teacher. "Every teacher and parent should know about Brain Gym" I thought as I had seen the positive results for myself".

I was so impressed that I trained as a Brain Gym consultant and Educational Kinesiologist. Once qualified, I was asked by a local doctor if I would be interested in working in his clinic as he had 4 ADHD children whose parents were resisting medication and were wanting something 'more natural'. I began working one day a week and all the children improved so much and never had to go onto medication. Word soon got around town and I was inundated with clients of all ages and conditions. This was the beginning of my busy private practice which continues to this day.



As I was introduced to Brain Gym by working with the movements first, I thought other professionals would also be interested so I developed one-day introductory Brain Gym workshops for parents, teachers, educators, aged care workers and other professionals. Immediately they were an instant success. Apparently was not the only one who had been asking those same questions about student's learning. I soon developed my own courses within Brain Gym and was traveling around Australia and overseas to teach teachers and other kinesiologists, how to help children and adults who were struggling with their learning and behavior.

Teachers and parents were so thrilled to be finally given some answers to easily switch on their child's brain that I was inundated with work. I was soon working with children who had all types of learning and behavioral difficulties including poor concentration, anxiety, autism, Asperger's Syndrome, and ADD/ADHD. I then returned to formal teaching as I was offered a part-time job as the special needs teacher in a local secondary school with over 1500 students, running the Brain Gym program for the special needs students and other students who needed some balancing. This is where I discovered retained reflexes and developed my reflex workshop. The kinesiology school program was very successful. The principal told me that the special needs students at his school were absolutely no issue at all; if there was ever a concern, I would balance them and all would be back to running smoothly again.

Word started getting around the town with other parents becoming aware of the kinesiology program operating at the school. When I first started working at the school, we had about 25 special needs students but when I left about 6 years later the number had increased to over 70 students; they were being bused in from all over the surrounding areas. But with my private work increasing all the time though word of mouth by the parents and teachers, I decided to give up traditional teaching to run my clinic and teach Brain Gym courses full time around Australia and overseas.

Many primary and secondary schools now engage me to balance individual students whose learning and/or behaviour are causing great concerns; often the students most 'at risk' in the school. This usually includes the neurodiverse students in mainstream schools. Programs usually run from 6-10 weeks. Some schools get various grants to pay for my services. Some schools want me to run one-hour sessions using the Brain Gym movements. The class teacher would stay in the room so I could teach them about Brain Gym and how to use the movements with their classes on their own. Most schools request me to run sessions to balance individual students using kinesiology. Teachers would tell me their students' issues and difficulties, and I would balance accordingly. Teachers and parents are usually very pleased with the results achieved. Teachers would often comment to me that they were stunned at their students' performance, attitude and behaviour when they returned to class. Many would tell me they would often write pages when the teacher had been lucky to get one sentence out of them in a lesson.

At one stage, I was employed at a local primary school to work in their autistic unit with their students. I ran half hour sessions with a maximum of 3 autistic students per session doing the Brain Gym movements. Their aides would attend and would often continue doing the Brain Gym in class. I would start the session with PACE, do a couple of Beanbags Ditties followed by some Brain Gym songs and activities. Sometimes I would use the aides to set up various activities in Brain Gym corners. I would always do a repatterning (an extremely effective 6 step technique taught in Brain Gym 101 course that really forms basic connections in the brain for learning) with each student which boosted their neural development and maturation with excellent results. When I started with these autistic students it was very evident who they were in class. Their teachers would often see me before their session asking me to work on various concerns. At the beginning the issues were often screaming, disrupting or unable to sit in class (typical autistic behaviours). After a couple of terms, the requests gradually changed to such issues, can you focus on their handwriting or reading today as they are having difficulties forming various letters or remembering various reading words. Visitors to the school could no longer identify the autistic students that attended sessions with me.

This school was so impressed with the results, I was asked to run an in-service day to teach all the staff the Brain Gym movements. They then made it school policy that all teachers and students had to begin their day with 5 minutes of Brain Gym, and again after each break. Even the most skeptical teachers agreed that the Brain Gym was worth doing, as they could see the results in their students' performance, learning and behaviour.

I often get teachers interested in kinesiology after seeing their students improve in their learning and behaviour, who are also working me in my clinic. Some parents initially choose not to tell their child's teacher they are having kinesiology sessions with me but will often get asked by the

teacher what is happening, after a few sessions with me. They have seen positive changes in the students. Some teachers will then contact me for information. Some want a copy of the home support Brain Gym so they can also do the specified home support Brain Gym movements in class. Many teachers will have the child that I am working with, lead their class in doing the Brain Gym.

Other teachers often organise me to speak to their teachers in a mini-in-service session (which I conduct free). This often leads to some attending one of my one-day workshops which often leads to attending the certified Brain Gym 101 course or organizing an in-service day for their school. Many teachers are so impressed they train for a new, but complimentary career. Many teachers have swapped their teaching for a kinesiology career and have never regretted it. Many do not understand why Brain Gym and kinesiology are not taught as part of teacher training and/or have an Educational Kinesiologist as part of every school's staff.

Today I still run my busy clinic with clients of all ages, do kinesiology balances in schools, run workshops to introduce Brain Gym to teachers and educators, and run curriculum or in-service days to educate all the staff. I also sell many of the Brain Gym products through my business.

I am also one of Educational Kinesiology's international trainers, teaching many of my own and their courses nationally and internationally.

### **Claire teaches**

- Brain Gym 101 and 104
- In-Synch - Sensory Integration using Brain Gym
- Optimal Organisation Profiles – OBO
- Vision Circles including Vision Gym
- Retained Primitive Reflexes and Their Effect on Learning, Behaviour & Wellbeing
- And numerous one day workshops to early childhood educators, teachers, aged care workers, health professionals, parents and any other interested people.

Brain Gym in the Classroom

Brain Gym for Early Childhood Education

Brain Gym for Neurodiversity

Brain Gym for Maturing Executive Functioning

Brain Gym for Sensory Integration

Brain Gym Games and Activities

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