



Action Research Project, Bulverde Elementary School, Comal ISD, Texas

Dr. Denise Kern

In October of 2002, Athena Oden, creator of Ready Bodies, Learning Minds, and Dr. Denise Kern, Principal of Bulverde Elementary School in Comal Independent School District, began a controlled research project into the effectiveness of the motor lab developed by Athena Oden, physical therapist. The motor lab is a prescriptive motor development program that focuses on providing for development of all systems for all children. The program hypothesis is centered on the idea that increased opportunities of motor and sensory experience for the development of the self-organization of skills is a key to academic success and behavior.

The basic question to be answered by this research was: *Do specific experiences in the Ready Bodies motor lab affect reading performance in pre-first grade students?*

Two different groups of children were included in the study: those from one elementary school who used the RBLM motor lab on a bi-weekly basis, and those from a control group of elementary school students who did not. Each group was tested during October 2002, and re-tested under the same parameters in May of 2003. The results were then tabulated and analyzed by Dr. Denise Kern. Her conclusions were presented during a certification process at The University of Texas at San Antonio.

Data was collected through the use of five different tests:

- ✚ VMI (Beery-Buktenica Developmental Test of Visual-Motor Integration); pre & post tests
- ✚ Ready Bodies, Learning Minds Screening Report; pre & post tests
- ✚ DRA (Developmental Reading Inventories) (Quarterly)
- ✚ TPRI (Texas Primary Reading Inventory) (August and May)
- ✚ Comal ISD Benchmark Reading tests (Quarterly)

While test results are too extensive to present in this forum, some conclusions can be described that show dramatic increase in reading performance. Specifically, in a portion of the research project which included only pre-first students of both campuses, *there was an average 70% increase in reading proficiency in the research group when compared to the control group (according to the DRA test results) over the 7 month period.*

Ready Bodies, Learning Minds collected data involving more students and more grade levels than were analyzed in Dr. Kern's study. Overall, we see similar results: for example, phonemic awareness of the kindergarten children appears to have been improved by the presence of the motor lab. Still, further data analysis needs to be made to document the correlation of improvement in academic and motor performance.